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THE MONTCLARION

#MSUStudentVoice Since 1928

Volume XXXI, Issue 5

Thursday, April 1, 2021

themontclarion.org

The One Year Anniversary of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Look in Retrospect



As the threat of COVID-19 grew nearer to the Montclair State campus, signage was posted in the residence hall bathrooms to encourage hand washing.

Ben Caplan | The Montclarion

Kayla Mulligan
Contributing Writer

This March marks one year since the global pandemic and lockdown due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that altered the way we live dramatically.

Montclair State University initially conducted its classes and day-to-day business fully remote until fall 2020, when the university began to offer mixed remote and in-person classes along with clubs and sports being able to practice and meet following safety guidelines.

Now in the spring 2021 semester, there has been a rise of in-person classes and involvement as the COVID-19 vaccine becomes more readily available to the American public. As a one-year anniversary, we look back on the difficult and abrupt transition to a new era of living as well as learning.

The change to virtual remote learning has been notable in not only empty classrooms but a

rather empty campus as well.

Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life, Karen L. Pennington, believes that student life has unfortunately changed in dramatic and difficult ways.

"Seeing the Student Center packed with students, hearing many voices and music out in the quad on a Wednesday afternoon [and] seeing students lying in a hammock outside of the library," Pennington said. "These are just a few things that I think we all miss and feel as a sense of loss."

She continued on to talk about her hopes to have a somewhat normal campus come the fall 2021 semester and beyond.

"I believe that next year when classes are back in person for everyone, when students will be able to gather for events in the ballrooms, when the stands at Panzer, Sprague and Pittser are packed with fans, that vibrant student life we have come to know and expect will return," Pennington said.

The transition from what used to be normal in-person learning to

the new virtual mode has been trying on most, if not all students, particularly this year's freshman class.

Neisha Bayard, a freshman exercise science major, discussed her initial reaction when the lockdown started.

"It was senior year of high school and it felt so rushed," Bayard said. "It felt like high school ended abruptly, which turned into quarantine, which then suddenly turned into college. So, I didn't really get to enjoy the senior experience. There is definitely a disconnect because I have not gotten to meet new people since we have been mostly virtual, so it also feels like I haven't gotten to enjoy the college experience yet either."

Bayard continued about the "new normal" on campus.

"The pandemic has definitely taught me to not take the normal for granted and this might even be our new normal, so we'll have to adjust to it," Bayard said.

Katerina, an international student from Ukraine studying her masters who asked to only be identified by her first name, shared the troubles of studying in a foreign country during a pandemic.

"With the pandemic, I've had a lot of problems with traveling, looking for housing, and of course, being an international student, going into a new country I don't know anyone and being all virtual hasn't allowed me to meet new people or professors," Katerina said.

Both Bayard and Katerina agree that going virtual has affected their motivation and made it more difficult to balance different aspects of life.

"It's been difficult to balance hours for work and for rest," Katerina said. "It's difficult when you have everything in one place. The first month was hard, I was eating, resting and studying all in one place, it's easy to feel overworked."

Despite the changes in learning, some students simply miss

seeing fellow students' faces scattered around campus.

Sam Angelo, a sophomore business administration major, explains what he misses most about being on campus pre-pandemic.

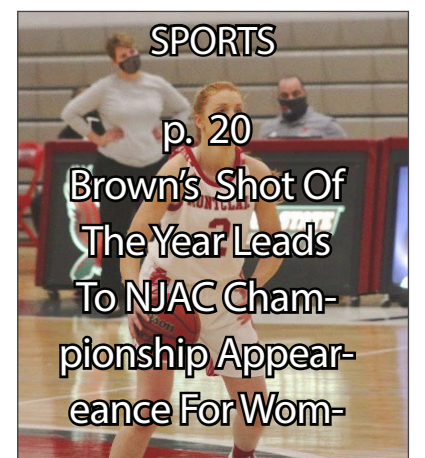
"What I miss most about school pre-pandemic is the amount of people on campus everyday and being able to meet new people," Angelo said. "Walking around, seeing our campus so packed everyday was an amazing sight to see."

Angelo is on the Montclair State baseball team and credits his involvement on the team for helping him stay focused on his work and keeping fit for the season.

The pandemic has presented changes that not only students had to adjust to, but faculty as well.

Jacqueline Regan, an English professor at Montclair State, discussed that the most difficult adjustment was the switch

Continued on page 2



THE MONTCLARION

School of Communication and Media, Room 2035
Montclair, N.J. 07043

The Montclarion is a publication of Montelcan Publishing, Inc. published weekly, except during the 2020 fall semester, examinations, summer and winter sessions. The Montclarion is funded by student fees distributed by Montclair State University and incoming advertising revenue. The views expressed in the Opinion section, with the exception of the Main Editorial, do not necessarily reflect the views of The Montclarion.

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Information reported in the Red Hawk Rap Sheet comes directly from the MSU Police Department. We do not print retractions to the rap sheet unless information directly from the police report is incorrect. We can print an update to the events only if the newspaper is given access to relevant documents to corroborate the information.

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The first issue of The Montclarion, then named The Pelican, was published on Nov. 28, 1928.

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Continued from page 1

to virtual learning from the traditional in-classroom learning.

"Face-to-face classes create a community, especially in the writing courses, where students learn not just from their instructor but from their peers as well," Regan said. "I am fortunate to have been able to teach in a hybrid format, so I have an in-person component to my class, but I am looking forward to being back with a full classroom in the fall."

Through the many hardships and challenges faced, the faculty, staff and students that make up Montclair State have faced the pandemic head-on and demonstrated the resilience they have as a community.

Media Relations Director, Andrew Mees, discussed the perseverance of Montclair State to provide their students with the best and safest way to overcome the obstacles the pandemic has presented.

"Our faculty moved the spring 2020 courses completely online in just two weeks, by itself a remarkable effort, and our students, faculty and staff have come together throughout the year to create new

and innovative ways of teaching, learning and community service," Mees said.

Mees went on to credit the campus community's strength.

"We continue to be in awe, though not surprised, of how our community has pressed on and come together to ensure we can provide the same critical services to students, faculty, staff and our surrounding communities," Mees said. "It is a testament to the character that makes every Red Hawk successful in whatever they choose to pursue for the rest of their lives."

The university has come a long way since last March, constantly adjusting to try and emulate the feeling of normalcy throughout campus while also ensuring the safety of everyone.

What was once an empty campus is now beginning to be filled with impromptu kickball games, outdoor classes and cheers from sports events. It has been a difficult transition and experience for many, if not all, but it will take time to adjust to a new way of living and learning post-pandemic.

Montclair State Students Share Mixed Reactions on Lack of Spring Break



It was announced in December 2020 that the Spring 2021 semester would be starting late and that there would be no spring break.

John LaRosa | The Montclarion

Jenna Sundel

Assistant News Editor

Montclair State University administration decided not to have a spring break during the spring 2021 semester to discourage travel and slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Center for Disease Control recommends avoiding travel at this time if possible. According to nj.com, almost all four-year colleges in New Jersey cancelled spring break. However, some opted to give students five non-consecutive days off during the semester, so students could still have a break to de-stress and work on assignments.

Cailey Merulla, a sophomore communication and media arts major, says that she feels stressed out and she would have used the break to work on large assignments.

"The workload is incredibly overwhelming and I can feel my GPA slip-

ping away from me," Merulla said. "Without a spring break we have no grace period between large assignments and midterms which creates so much unnecessary stress. Professors are not going easy either since online schooling is now our normal and we're supposed to be used to it by now."

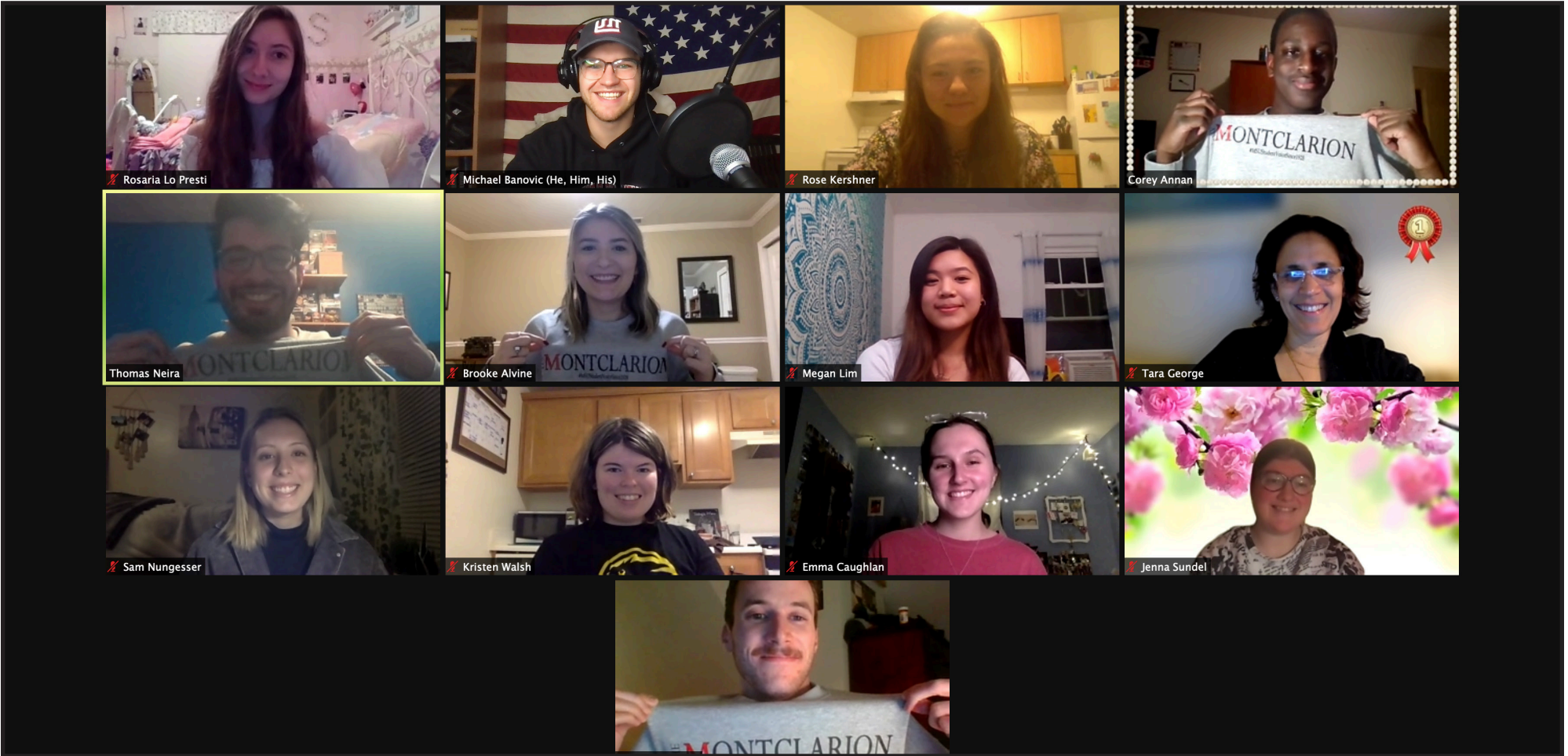
Bryanna Rosario, a sophomore English major, views the decision differently. Rosario originally wanted to have a spring break, but now understands the school wanted to make the safest decision possible.

"If people went away and came back we might have more cases so I can completely understand what they're doing when they took it away," Rosario said.

Despite the school's efforts to slow the spread, Montclair State reported its highest weekly number of COVID-19 cases on March 18, with 42 positive cases.

Report Montclair State University COVID-19 policy violations on the RAVE Guardian App

The Montclarion Wins 9 NJPF Awards With Two For First Place



The Montclarion staff celebrates their wins over a Zoom conference call meeting.

Michael Banovic | The Montclarion

Rosaria Lo Presti
News Editor

The New Jersey Press Foundation (NJPF) awarded The Montclarion with two first-place awards followed by two second-place awards and five third-place awards in the statewide College Newspaper Contest.

College newspapers around New Jersey select their best articles, photographs and videos each year to submit to the contest. Anything published between March 1, 2020, and Feb. 28, 2021, was eligible for nomination, and the winners were announced on March 17.

Thomas Neira, editor-in-chief of The Montclarion, won a third-place award for the arts and entertainment/critical writing category. He acknowledges the commitment of The Montclarion staff through a difficult time period.

“I’m really proud of all the work our team has done,” Neira said. “It’s been a difficult year but the editors and staff we have on our team has really helped us overcome all the challenges posed to us. Winning these awards reflects that, and I really couldn’t ask for a better team than this one.”

Jen Losos, former editor-in-chief of The Montclarion, won a third-place award for her coronavirus/COVID-19 coverage and is proud of the staff’s hard work.

“The Montclarion staff and all of its contributors are truly the most resilient and hard-working group on campus,” Losos said. “Despite the pandemic, they have persevered and have come out on top. The whole staff of The Montclarion should

be proud of their strength while working through this pandemic. It hasn’t been easy, and their hard work during this crazy year is being recognized.”

The writing categories that won first-place awards were given to sports and the arts & entertainment/critical writing categories for “Montclair State’s Anniversary Football Season Does Not Come To Be,” and “The Simplicity of ‘If Anything Happens I Love You’ Delivers a Complex Message,” respectively.

Megan Lim is the assistant entertainment editor of The Montclarion and won the first-place award for the arts and entertainment/critical writing category.

“I feel like when it’s your voice you’re putting out there, it’s so much easier to doubt yourself and your writing,” Lim said. “But this win is such a confidence boost and I take it as a blessing and a sign that I succeed in doing what I love.”

Kalya Francione is a staff writer at The Montclarion and won the first-place award for the sports writing category.

“This was the first piece I ever got to write for The Montclarion so I am honored to have it be recognized for this award,” Francione said.

The second-place awards were given to one sports article in the biography/personality profile category and one photo essay in the photography category, for “Two-Sport Athlete Cameryn Martin Motivated to Honor his Mother’s Legacy” and “#FOCUSDEMOCRACY: Photo Essay: Montclair Community Rejoices in the Streets for President-Elect Biden.”

Corey Annan is the sports editor of The Montclarion and won second place for the biography/personality profile category.

“It’s truly an honor to win another state media award,” Annan said. “Ever since my freshman year, it’s been a goal of mine to win an NJPF, but being able to win the award two years in a row is a blessing. This award wouldn’t have been possible without the support of the editorial team and my fellow staff writers.”

John LaRosa, a staff writer/photographer at The Montclarion, won a second-place award for his #FOCUSDEMOCRACY photo essay.

“Thanks to everyone for the opportunities given to me,” LaRosa said.

Third-place awards were given in the online video category for “Student Reactions to COVID-19 Pandemic.” “Top Moments of the Men’s Basketball Season” won third place in the photography category. Third-place awards were also won in coronavirus/COVID-19 coverage category and in editorial writing for “Editorial: Every Crisis Has a Turning Point to Recovery, Let’s Make Sure It’s Now.” “The Little Things’ Misses the Mark Big Time” also won third place in arts and entertainment/critical writing.

Mackenzie Robertson, former managing editor of The Montclarion, won a third-place award for her coronavirus/COVID-19 coverage. She is immensely proud of the team for being able to switch so quickly to an online-only publication and reporting completely remotely.

“It was a big challenge, but seeing how hard the editorial

staff worked throughout the first semester of COVID-19 proved they were a force to be reckoned with, so I am not surprised they went on to win nine awards this year,” Robertson said. “It is humbling and heartwarming to know even after graduating, last year’s hard work on COVID-19 related articles and photo essays is being recognized by NJPF.”

Jenna Sundel, assistant news editor of The Montclarion, also won the third-place award for her coronavirus/COVID-19 coverage.

“I was so honored to receive this award for my coverage of COVID-19,” Sundel said. “The pandemic has impacted everyone’s life this past year, so it was encouraging to know that we are doing a great job covering this topic.”

Casey Masteron is the feature editor of The Montclarion and also won a third-place award for her coronavirus/COVID-19 coverage.

“I’ll be honest, I didn’t expect to win,” Masteron said. “We had so many wonderful articles that were submitted this year, but I was honored to be considered a part of this.”

Brielle Wyka, video editor of The Montclarion, won a third-place award for her video coverage.

“You know I’ve always dreamt of winning an award for my work but I thought it would come much later in my career,” Wyka said. “I’m so grateful that this is something I can celebrate and that I have something to show for what I contribute to this amazing news organization.”

Annabel Reyes, former video

editor of The Montclarion, won a third-place award along with Wyka on their video coverage.

“We published this piece at the start of the pandemic when students were struggling to adjust to the new changes so I am very proud of everyone at The Montclarion for coming together and giving the students a platform to express their concerns during this difficult time,” Reyes said.

Chris Krusberg is a staff writer/photographer for The Montclarion and won a third-place award for the photography category.

“I am very humbled to be recognized by the NJPF for the top moment of the men’s basketball season,” Krusberg said. “Covering sports has always been a passion of mine and to be noticed for my sports work is incredibly gratifying. I’d like to thank Ben Caplan and the rest of The Montclarion team for having the trust in me to cover a variety of different sports as it is always a pleasure.”

Samantha Impaglia is the managing editor of The Montclarion and is proud of the team’s consistent hard work through a pandemic.

“Seeing how this team accomplished so much, especially in a pandemic is the best feeling,” Impaglia said. “I’m so proud of everyone for their consistent hard work, especially seeing my former sports team writers take home multiple awards, it’s paid off.”

Tara George, head of the journalism and television and digital media department in the School of Communication

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

and Media, is also the faculty advisor to The Montclarion. She is proud of the commitment The Montclarion staff contributed throughout coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

“It’s always really exciting to win awards at NJPF, it really makes me feel proud,” George said. “They’ve really worked hard without stopping through a pandemic, kept each other going and continued coming through with really important stories of what’s been happening at Montclair State through

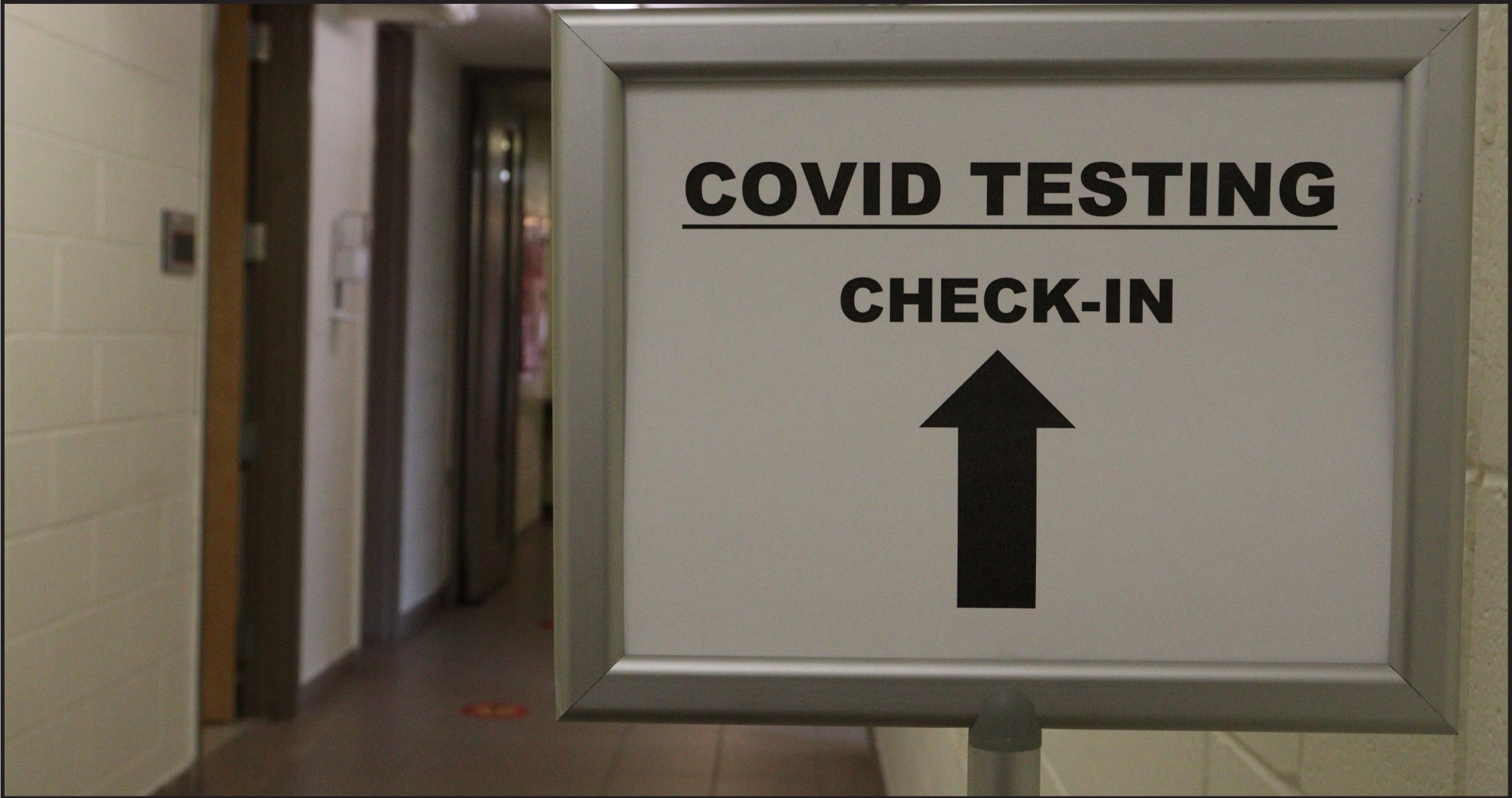
this really interesting period. If I could give an award for running a great organization, I think they would get first prize for that.”

The NJPF award winners were invited to participate in the on-site awards presentation which would have been held in April, but was canceled due to the ongoing pandemic. The winners will expect their award certificates and plaques in the mail.



The Montclarion Staff celebrates their wins over a Zoom conference call meeting. Michael Banovic | The Montclarion

Residential Students Hit With Restrictions After Spike in COVID-19 Cases



A sign in front of the COVID-19 testing area on the first floor of Webster Hall. John LaRosa | The Montclarion

Carley Campbell
Staff Writer

More restrictions were announced to Montclair State University residential students on March 20, as Residential Life contacted students via email. The increase in restrictions comes as transmission levels rise according to unnamed university contact tracers. Up to 40 students have tested positive in the previous week, raising the total to double digits for the first time in the spring 2021 semester.

These restrictions include, but are not limited to, no visitors at all until Sunday, April 11. This also includes those who live on campus, but not in the same building and includes overnight visits. The

policy of mandatory required testing every other week is still in effect, with any form of test avoidance meaning immediate removal from residential buildings for the rest of the semester.

The doubling down on restrictions comes as spring break season for colleges and universities across the country begins. Montclair State is one of many colleges opting to avoid a spring break for the spring 2021 semester to stay clear of the potential rise in cases.

Residential Life asserts that none of the cases are from classes or office visits, instead highlighting off-campus visitors in residence halls in their email as possible contaminants for students. These restrictions are no surprise to

the small, but significant residential policy on campus.

For Tony Jordan, a junior marketing major who lives in Blanton Hall, the new policies are a new pain.

“To be honest, the school is punishing the rest of us [residential students] for the actions of a few and it’s annoying,” Jordan said. “Like we all get tested a lot and no we aren’t allowed to visit another dorm hall.”

Residents are expected to stay on campus at all times unless they sign waivers with the Office of Residence Life to leave at highly specific times and dates. While good in theory, Jordan asserts it is not completely safe.

“The school is putting their efforts into the wrong thing in order to ‘protect us’ like acting like a self-assessment that most people would lie on anyway is

supposed to protect us, and then they threaten to kick us out if it’s not completed,” Jordan said.

Even on the other side of campus beyond The Heights and halls, Clove Road students are still feeling the impact. Unlike on-campus students such as Jordan, Clove Road students are not required to have meal plans. This in turn necessitates grocery shopping and off-campus travel.

Asa Hinson, a junior television and digital media major, lives in Hawk Crossings, one of the many residential buildings on Clove Road. Hinson agrees with the initial policies made by the school, given that they were doing what they could to ensure students were safe. Now she feels it has crossed the line.

“Although COVID-19 is a very serious matter, I feel like the school was extremely ridiculous with its

new reinforced rules,” Hinson said. “No one should be getting kicked off campus for leaving as long as students are taking precautions everywhere else. You just can’t keep students hostage, it’s ridiculous.”

The school is working to ensure that there are few venues available for mass gatherings, but as of now has not confirmed if that will be extended to classrooms and laboratories as well. They are tightening occupancy limits for dining hall venues and other indoor gathering spaces.

All students are still required to wear masks in public spaces and practice social distancing, and noninvasive temperature check stations are in every building and are a requirement to enter.

The office of Residence Life could not be reached for comment.

Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program Welcomes New Creative Zine



The gender, sexuality and women's studies program at Montclair State is in the process of making a collaborative zine with student help.

Photo courtesy of Jonah Schwartz

Lauren Lamantia
Co-Chief Copy Editor

As of recently, the gender, sexuality and women's studies program (GSWS) at Montclair State University announced that it is in the process of making a collaborative zine with the help of students. A zine, historically known as a small-circulated magazine showcasing creativity of all kinds, has since symbolized the encouragement of unfiltered, honest and raw voices to be heard that are typically not associated with mainstream media outlets. Throughout ages, zines have acted as powerful statements in regards to feminism and queer voices, impacting social movements while maintaining a sense of community. The new collaborative zine with students will showcase GSWS talent and encourage student voices regarding fashion, photography, manifestos to written pieces and artwork, along with any kind of submission regarding GSWS such as movies, playlists and more. Dr. Jessica Restaino, the director of the GSWS program, spoke on the importance of

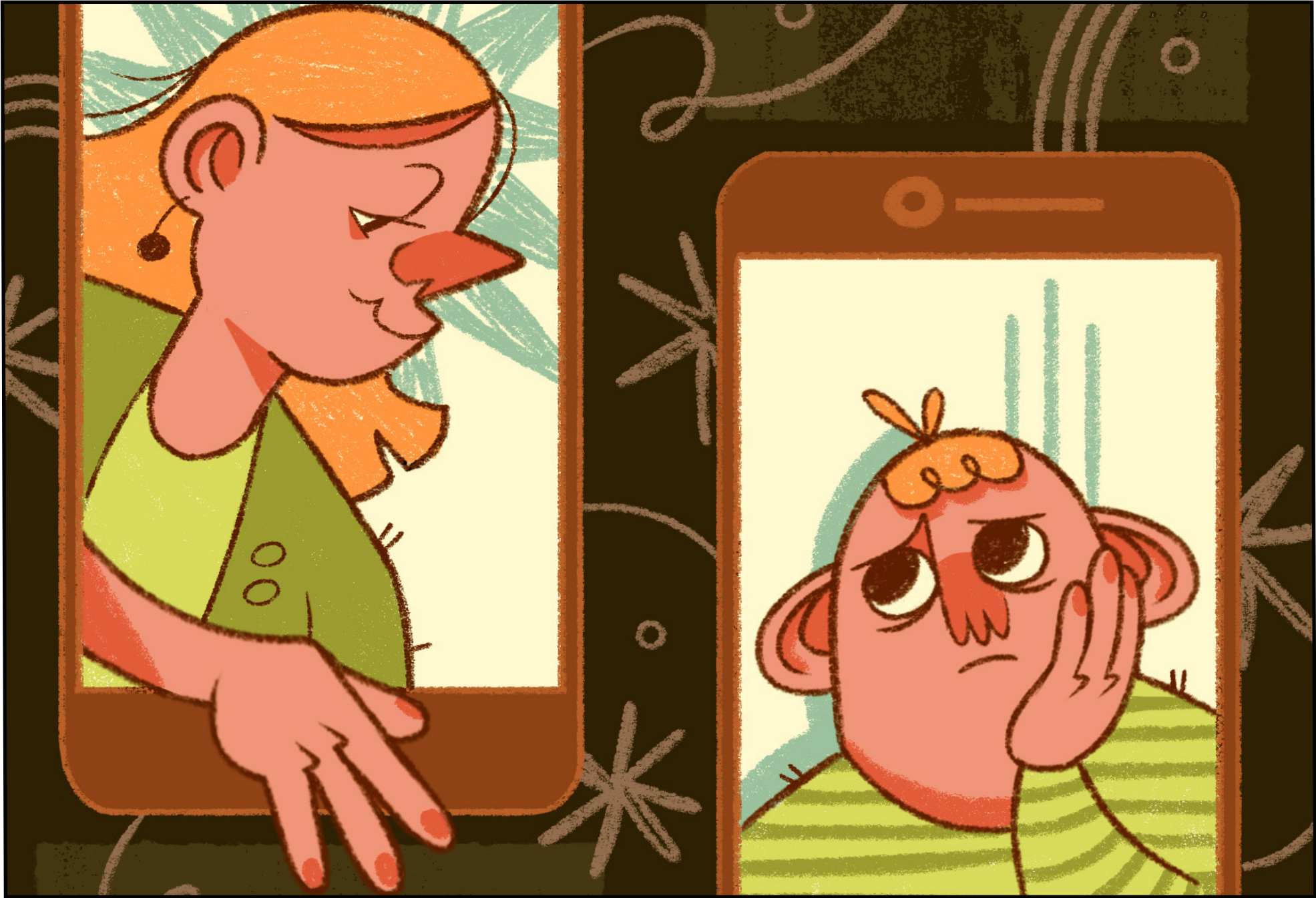
the zine and how impactful she believes it will be to the program. "I'm looking forward to the ways that this project will embody and forward the mission of the program," Restaino said. "That it will be a space for not only diversity but freedom of expression, I think it is going to be a deeply intersectional project. In many ways, it will celebrate and hold queerness also at its center. The zine itself is a pastiche, it's a physical rendering, you copy, and cut and paste and assemble it. It has this activist history. It's not supposed to be necessarily clean, it can be non-linear." Restaino continued, expressing the passion within the voices that lie behind each page of the zine. "The thing I find very moving about the zine is it's a construction and that matters, because it's an invitation to construct yourself," Restaino said. "I think for so many of us we had the experience of functioning inside of someone else's construction. This is about taking something apart, putting it back together, newly, differently, radically and I think that's part of the beauty of the project."

Restaino credits the creative brains behind the project to Nina Farley and Jonah Schwartz, noting that they brought the idea to her attention in hopes of inspiring new students within the GSWS program and campus-wide. "When they said they wanted to do a zine I was moved, it feels like a generational bridge for me," Restaino said. Schwartz, a recent Montclair State University alumni who worked as an intern for GSWS, expressed how they think the zine can reach all kinds of audiences. "There's a lot more freedom with content and more range that can be encapsulated into this project because students can come together and sort of write or make art about their own experiences," Schwartz said. "There's no kind of central thing that we have to meet. It's just a community coming together and I'm hoping that this project will foster more community in the GSWS program as well as other programs, we're hoping to kind of unite." Schwartz also continued on their inspiration behind the idea and how it grew from their own experience at Montclair State.

"Coming to this school is where I went with this, like coming to this school as a freshman and seeing that there's a program with this zine with all of these different queer and POC and different intersectional voices would've been really important for any person who feels any of those experiences to see," Schwartz said. "It would've made them feel safer in our school and more excited about their education. I feel like that was what I was lacking." Farley, a junior psychology major who works as an intern for GSWS, expressed how they think the zine allows for more freedom of expression among a college community and how that can be a positive. "These stories are deeply personal and I hope that readers are able to see themselves in these stories and be able to see that I am in a school where people have similar experiences to me or experiences that I want to learn more about and I don't think you find that everywhere," Farley said. Farley also expressed how they hope the zine inspires readers. "First that they learn something different but also that they're inspired to seek out old zines or other zines that are happening now," Farley said. "There's so much to

be learned from zines so I really hope that will inspire readers to seek out different educational avenues." Gabriel Gomez, a senior theater studies major, expressed their thoughts on the new collaborative zine with students. "It's magnificent," Gomez said. "It's great that we are going to see queer imagination come alive. We are all everywhere and it's important for us to have this outlet. I want to see something that will make me cry and laugh." Gomez also expressed their encouragement of other artists and looks forward to seeing a widespread of creativity shine through the zine. "I am an artist and I love seeing other artists shine through," Gomez said. "It makes me happy to open it and see all of these stories. We are amplifying queer creative expression and it's important to show our voices through this zine." More information on the zine and the GSWS program can be found on Instagram @gsu_msu.

FEATURE



Ian Long | The Montclarion

Montclair State Confessions and CAPS
Team Up Against Depression

Casey Masterson
Feature Editor

As we reach the year benchmark of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the mental scars left behind on the population are making themselves apparent. Among those affected are Montclair State University students, whose social temperature is taken by the Instagram account Montclair State Confessions (@montclairstateconfessions).

This Instagram account, usually reserved for fun anonymous posts, has received seven confessions of suicidal intent this winter. With rising mental health concerns on the horizon, both Montclair State Confessions and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) want to assure the campus community that there is help available to them.

Many Montclair State students are aware of the aforementioned Instagram account, but few know who the student behind it all is. Justin Watson, a junior information technology major, is the brains behind the @montclairstateconfessions account, with 298 posts and over three thousand followers, and counting. Watson started the account in order to bring the community together.

“Montclair State Confessions is an

Instagram page that I created to help people share their experiences,” Watson said. “It’s for people to get together and make this school more of a community, because this school is more of a commuter school, so some people don’t really know what’s going on inside these walls. So I’m giving people an outlet to voice their opinions and their situations to see how people can connect with that.”

The account is generally the face of fun

confessions that range from relationships to raunchy activity. All posts are anonymous, as they are filled out on a Google form. Even Watson does not know the identity of those who post.

Amidst the sea of fun, alarming cries for help have surfaced. Watson has received seven confessions stating some form of suicidal intent. Before the pandemic these messages were rare, but as it rages on these messages have begun to surface.

“Just to see everyone going through what I’m going through and even worse it affects me too. You don’t want to see people go through that, especially if you can try to help them and change it.”

-Justin Watson, junior information technology major and @montclairstateconfessions founder

“It was a gradual thing because right away the pandemic is new to all of us,” Watson said. “Plus we were told it was going to be short, it was going to be like two weeks to a month. Now that it has been a year, you can start to see the effects on people.”

Watson, in a noble effort, made two Instagram videos on the account where he spoke to the larger Montclair State community about mental health issues. The sincerity in these videos is palpable and one can hear from the tone of Watson’s voice that he wants to help his fellow peers.

“The first video I made was because that’s when I first really started to see them [the suicidal messages.] I wanted to put that as a notice that I was starting to see these,” Watson said. “It was more of a personal video, that I’m here, there are people here, there are things available for you. Now the second video is more of a call for action because the first video I tried to bring awareness to it, but it has only gotten worse. Now, something has to be done and that’s what I’m trying to do right now.”

This is a tall task for one person to handle. Watson has reached out to the University Police Department (UPD) and to CAPS about these confessions. Watson can not provide names, as all confessions are anon-

ymous, but now he no longer has to handle this situation alone. Receiving confessions like these, while terrifying for others, has also taken a toll on Watson.

“I’m just like everybody else, so I deal with social and school stress,” Watson said. “Just to see everyone going through what I’m going through and even worse it affects me too. You don’t want to see people go through that, especially if you can try to help them and change it.”

Watson has made a powerful ally to aid him in advising the Montclair State community. Dr. Jaclyn Friedman-Lombardo, the director of CAPS, is happy to work with Watson for the benefit of the campus community’s mental health.

“I think if you have a social media outlet where people talk about suicidal thoughts and feelings, they should be prepared to give them [the students] the proper resources,” Friedman-Lombardo said. “I want him to have support in doing that to make sure the information is safe. I’m happy he’s interested in collaborating because that would be ideal.”

It is important to note that CAPS is in operation, even during the pandemic and still accessible to students in a COVID-19 friendly manner. Services such as group sessions, phone screenings and individual sessions are still available. If the average of six counseling sessions is not enough, students can transition to a group or be assisted in finding a long-term therapist through the CAPS referral

service.

“Let’s Talk,” a quick, individual session, has been moved to Zoom and renamed “Let’s Tele-Talk” and is offered nine times a week.

“50% of the people who come here [for Let’s Tele-Talk] sign up for sessions,” Friedman-Lombardo said. “It’s one-on-one and a brief confidential consultation,”

There are also plenty of new options offered through CAPS during the pandemic. TAO Connect, online therapy assistance, offers many modules from relationship problems to depression. It is accessible to students, faculty and staff through a Montclair State email.

There is also a new feature on the CAPS directory, which transfers you to a mental health clinician if faced with an urgent mental health problem. In the past, if CAPS was closed, students would have to contact UPD. Lastly, Kognito training is available through the CAPS website with a Montclair State email to train people to notice signs of depression in others.

Friedman-Lombardo acknowledges the hardship of these times but urges the community to pull through because the light is at the end of the tunnel.

“All the loss we’ve experienced is significant whether it’s loss of life, or jobs, or experience,” Friedman-Lombardo said. “There’s a lot of things we’ve lost this year and I think that contributes to the stress. As we move to the spring and news gets more hopeful, we have things to look forward to.”

With all the help that CAPS is able to offer, it is important to acknowledge they are not supermen. According to Friedman-Lombardo, the ratio of counselors to students is 1 to 2,000 rather than the recommended

1 to 1,000-1,500 as recommended by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS.) CAPS has been approved by IACS since 2014.

There are space constraints for Friedman-Lombardo and her fellow CAPS counselors. Before the pandemic, there were plans to give CAPS more space in the Student Center, but Friedman-Lombardo explained that these plans have been put on hold indefinitely, if not canceled. A standstill in the hiring process has also left a position vacant within the CAPS offices.

With so much weight on the shoulders of the counselors at CAPS, Watson believes that Montclair State administrators and campus institutions like Residence Life should offer support to the students on campus.

“If you have to tell the RA to do wellness checks, take everyone into the hallway one-on-one to see how they are doing, just check-ins to make sure these people are okay,” Watson said. “Something like that, something small, so there are notes of people who might not be okay, so we know if it is time to step in.”

The larger Montclair State community has also seen suicidal confessions on Montclair State Confessions. Edward DuCoin, a senior film major, noticed these alarming confessions surfacing among the usually upbeat content.

“I should preface that I’m not a mental health expert at all, but it definitely seems like the people who are sending those things to the [Montclair State] Confessions account are mainly looking for help, or don’t know where to go and are using that as a thing,” DuCoin said. “It’s very jarring because no one expects the page to be

used for that reason.”

DuCoin believes that Montclair State can also be doing more to aid CAPS in their fight for student’s mental health. Although he has seen the emails that come out occasionally in the Red Hawk News, he would like to see more through other avenues.

“More on their social media pages,” DuCoin said. “There might be stuff I haven’t seen, but other than CAPS, I haven’t seen the Montclair [State] page talk about it.”

Watson stands at the forefront of this mental health crisis since he is a voice for the concerns of Montclair State students. He received these confessions and made the noble stand to aid his fellow peers. In order to fight off the mental fog, Watson wants to remind everyone that you have to fight for yourself during these trying times.

“You got to remember why you came here to begin with,” Waston said. “There’s a goal you came here with. You can’t just forget it, you’ve got to let it push you. Maybe you won’t be able to conquer the whole thing in one try, but try taking little goals and conquering one at a time. It’ll help.”

Mental Heath Resources:
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Available 24 hours: 800-273-8255
CAPS: 973-655-5211 (Option 2 after hours)



Justin Watson prepares the confessions to go onto the Instagram website, but does not know the identities of the posters.

Photo courtesy of Justin Watson



Dr. Jaclyn Friedman-Lombardo was happy to explain the resources available to students.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Friedman-Lombardo



Sarah DiPippa with her ID from the set of the “Ways and Means” pilot episode.

Emma Richter | The Montclarion

Montclair State’s Own Goes From Classroom to On-Set

Emma Richter
Staff Writer

Around their junior and senior years of college, students start to venture out and look for internships, jobs and other potential opportunities within their field. Here at Montclair State University, upperclassmen are doing just that, but because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, internships are no longer the same.

Despite the virus’s best efforts to knock people down, many have managed to stay afloat and regain their footing. One of these people is Montclair State’s very own, Sarah DiPippa, a junior television and digital media (TVDM) major with a minor in business. Even through a computer screen, you will continually find DiPippa in a bubbly mood and always excited to talk about anything.

DiPippa recently had an amazing offer land in her lap: being hired as a health and safety production assistant at CBS. Her role was involved in the production of a new drama series, “Ways and Means,” starring Patrick Dempsey. Dempsey is best known for his role in the hit ABC drama series, “Grey’s Anatomy.”

With glistening purple lights behind her on a Zoom call, DiPippa explained

her role on set and what exactly her job entailed.

“My role was to check in all cast and crew members,” DiPippa said. “So, as they would come in, I would take their temperature, check on the clearance list to see if they tested negative, to then allow them on set.”

Bundled up in her winter hat, layers and her production vest, DiPippa also was in charge of distributing personal protective equipment, such as masks, gloves and hand sanitizer. She also had to make sure everyone on set was respecting social distancing regulations.

The production was shot in different locations and Montclair State happened to be one of them. Bohn Hall was suddenly transformed into a hospital, while the studio in the School of Communication and Media served as a talk show scene for the new series.

DiPippa stated that the production lasted about fifteen days, ending a bit earlier than anticipated. Prior to that, DiPippa worked about 12-14 hour shifts, starting her days at around 4 a.m.

DiPippa’s good friend Jessica Pocheck, another junior TVDM major with a minor in Italian, was the first to know about this production assistant opportunity. Pocheck works at Raymond’s, a restaurant in Montclair, where another scene for the episode was shot at. She recalls

the director coming in, scoping out the restaurant and her antennas shooting up immediately.

“Like the nosy person I am, I had to approach him,” Pocheck said. “I told him I was a TVDM major and he reached out to me a few weeks later.”

That nudge from Pocheck got her and DiPippa into the production. This is not the first time the two friends have helped each other out as well. DiPippa helped Pocheck land another opportunity in their field a while back with a different internship.

As for DiPippa’s personal experience on set, she claims that the only downside was having to be inactive at times. A huge part of her job was being the aide for the cast and crew, so when the filming was actually taking place, she would stay in holding with background actors.

“Sometimes it wasn’t that boring,” DiPippa said. “I took the time to talk to them about their experience, about their careers.”

More than anything, DiPippa’s favorite part about the whole experience was finally getting to be a part of the field she sees herself working for in the future.

“I have such a bigger appreciation for the art now, [just from] going through this, experiencing the number of hours [and] the amount of hard work,” DiPippa said. “People were constantly working,

even on lunch and people on their walks, handling issues.”

DiPippa also learned a lot about networking, as she was pushed into rooms with aspiring and accomplished actors and directors. It made her appreciate the financial aspect of shooting production even more from seeing how much goes into a simple pilot episode.

DiPippa’s boyfriend, Ethan Mersing, a junior history major at Montclair State, got a firsthand view of how this internship impacted her.

“She was definitely excited about this opportunity and she was very optimistic about it and did not want to pass it up,” Mersing said.

He knows that no matter what she does, she will do it right and work hard for it.

With shooting on pause right now for the CBS production, DiPippa said that the final part of it will resume shortly, but is unsure if she will be a part of it with school now in session.

In spite of it all, DiPippa still got the most out of her experience, working not just in her field, but in the time of a pandemic, where assisting in health and safety production is now an in-demand profession.



Oatmeal is a great way to start your day and keep you full for your classes.

Samantha Bailey | The Montclarion

Gourmet Bailey’s Essential Recipes for College Students: Pt.1

Samantha Bailey
Assistant Feature Editor

The spring semester is in full swing and with all of us becoming increasingly busier, I wanted to start sharing recipes designed for college students. These are easy-to-follow recipes that you can execute within a dorm or communal kitchen. You can make these dishes when you’re lazy and still want something delicious. I’m calling the series, “Essential Recipes for College Students.”

It’s only fitting that I start this series off with the meal you start your day with: breakfast. I know many of us college students skip breakfast, but it’s my favorite meal and time of the day. Eating breakfast has been proven to help you stay focused and do better in school, so try this breakfast out and see how you feel afterward.

One of my all-time favorite recipes for breakfast is oatmeal. Oatmeal isn’t just for the elderly, who prefer eating soft foods, it’s for everyone. It has great nutrients to keep you full for hours and fueled for school. Trust me, this easy blueberry oatmeal will be thrown into your daily routine after you try it.

What you’ll need:

- ½ cup old fashioned oats
- 1 cup almond milk (or water)
- ½ cup frozen blueberries (fresh also works)
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup (add additional maple syrup if you like extra sweetness)
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

- Toppings:
- Peanut butter
 - Fruit
 - Granola
 - Nuts

To get started, pour your blueberries, maple syrup, vanilla extract, almond milk and cinnamon into a microwave-safe bowl. Next, pour your oats in

and mix them together until combined. Take your bowl to the microwave and cook for 2 ½ to three minutes.

Remove the bowl from the microwave and stir again. Let your oats sit and absorb your almond milk for five minutes, stirring occasionally and check the consistency afterward. If you want your oats to be drier, cook them for an additional 30 seconds.

While you’re waiting the five minutes for your oats to finish absorbing the almond milk, you can prepare for the best part of any breakfast bowl: the toppings. My personal favorite to top oatmeal with is melted peanut butter, cinnamon and additional fruit. It’s the perfect combination of sweet and salty. I’d highly recommend it.

You can also top your oats with more maple syrup and granola. For an extra amount of protein, top your oats with your favorite vanilla yogurt and roasted nuts.

This recipe is college student and dorm room-friendly and it’s totally customizable. It takes less than 10 minutes to make and it will keep you full for all your morning classes. Don’t knock oatmeal until you’ve tried it the “Gourmet Bailey” way.

Until the next bite.



Toppings are a great way to add more flavor to your oatmeal.

Samantha Bailey | The Montclarion

Forgive and We'll Never Forget



Ian Long | *The Montclarion*

As young Americans move up the educational ladder, they are told from ages as young as grammar school that they must attend college so they can get a job and live a good life. Well, here we are, but the only thing lying ahead is decades of debt. Meanwhile, a clear, simple solution continues to take a back seat to greed. For Montclair State University, in particular, over half of students utilize federal financial loans to pay for their tuition, with payments averaging a little over \$6,500 per year after graduating. That amount may seem manageable, but for those about to enter a decimated economy and desolate job market because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it's anything but. Up until now and the eerily uncertain future, Montclair State's graduate default rate,

that is, the percentage of students who do not make a student loan payment after 270 days, was quite favorable, calculated at 4.8% in 2016. However, we have learned this past year that everything can suddenly be turned upside down through no fault of our own. Furthermore, tuition and room and board costs have increased exponentially each year and with state funding and student enrollment for the university taking a hit due to the pandemic, that incline will almost certainly be sharpened. Generally, the average indebted college graduate can expect over 20 years of student loan payments. That comes with no guarantee of a job within the field the degree belongs to or any job paying a wage large enough to satisfy their loans while also paying for rent, utilities or groceries.

Before the presidential election this past November, The Montclarion endorsed the Democratic ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris and it is with disappointment and frustration that we acknowledge the Biden administration's failure, thus far, to live up to the standards we advocated for. President Biden has claimed he would be willing to expel student loan debt up to \$10,000. However, it has yet to be made clear whether that motion is even within his jurisdiction. Even so, a \$10,000 expulsion would only aid 30% of loan borrowers whereas an expulsion of \$50,000 would take care of 80% of borrowers. When asked about a \$50,000 forgiveness plan, Biden answered, "I will not make that happen." Whenever the topic of student loan debt forgiveness

comes up, people are always quick to argue how it would be unfair to those who have already paid off their college tuition and student loans and that there is no reason why people in debt now should get a free pass. That argument is the same as claiming it wouldn't be right to give people the COVID-19 vaccine because it's unfair to those who suffered from it. It is understood that contracting COVID-19 can be a matter of life and death, whether it be for you or for those you may come into contact with, but decades of crippling financial debt carry a threatening risk as well. Living paycheck to paycheck, just trying to make it to your next payday is not living. It is surviving and no one should have their entire future filled with financial burden and wor-

ry because of a decision they were told they had to make their entire lives in order to avoid that exact obstacle. Generation after generation enters the workforce with dozens of thousands of dollars of debt standing lockstep in the way of a financially stable and, more importantly, mentally stable life. A \$50,000 expulsion plan would cost about \$1 trillion. Often times, people hear that number and immediately become turned off. The argument is made that money would be more valuable if put toward things like the military or foreign aid or what have you, but what is more valuable than the well-being of the newest members of our country's workforce? Nothing.

Campus Voices:

How has the cost of tuition and room & board affected you?

By Joni Mae De Los Santos



"The cost of student life is very high. I lived in Hawks Crossing and I heard they recently doubled the price to live there. I was of the last people to get it for four thousand dollars a semester and now it's eight thousand dollars."

- Dylan Kelly
Film Graduate



"The cost of college financially hasn't been a benefact but really what it's been is more of a cost and not being around people I grew up with. I'm from South Jersey so moving up to North Jersey to stay at school means I'm away from people that I have known for long periods of time and I have to spend more time traveling."

- Jamil Moris
Business Adminsitration Junior



"It gives me more to think about than what I would have before. In my day-to-day life, I don't really notice it."

- Larissa Dirienzi
Psychology Sophomore



"It didn't really affect me because I'm on scholarship so I kind of go to school for free. I think it affects other students especially people who commute because everything is online. The full cost of tuition isn't worth it especially if you're staying at home. You can get classes online for cheaper."

- Jose Martinez
Criminal Justice Junior

My Fellow Student Body: How Are We Really?



LAUREN LAMANTIA
CO-CHIEF COPY
EDITOR

As the spring semester begins again and students living at home get a semblance of the college experience through a blue-dimmed computer screen, they can't help but feel at a loss at times.

Due to the lack of social interaction and stripping away of what was supposed to be our roaring 20s, students like myself can't help but feel defeated by endless days turned into nights thinking of what will happen in the months to come.

With students now facing all sorts of challenges the world has piled on top of us within the past year, attention to our mental health matters more than ever.

A year ago this March, the once independent social life we had on campus was pulled right from under us after spring break. How do students now living at home strive each day to rebuild a life they once had? Our simple walks around campus are now replaced with the same sidewalks we stepped on walking to the grade school bus.

Along with feeling as if we were sent back to the days before we even started college, students are faced with trying to continue to grow in places we've out-



Ian Long | The Montclarion

grown, striving to be the adult versions of ourselves in environments we have moved on from. This reality is hard to face as we balance online classes, extra-curriculars and a personal life.

The emphasis on mental health among students needs to be recognized and talked about more openly in classrooms, meetings and among each other more than ever. It needs to be normal-

ized to ask someone in your class if they are okay and even more normalized to be able to email your professor that you are not in the best headspace mentally to attend class.

It is important to keep in mind as we continue the school year that no one truly knows what happens behind the faces we see on our screens every week; but it is crucial that we at least

pay attention to our peers to make sure no one feels alone in their battle with mental health.

It can be hard to admit to others that the smile you wear on camera is not how you truly feel at the end of the night. This is why it is so important to reach out to your classmates and peers if you see signs of mental health issues in someone you have encountered and ask them how they're doing instead of ignoring what may just seem like them being withdrawn from class.

In reminiscing on the times we did share meeting friends for lunch at Au Bon Pain and staying up way too late in our dorm rooms, we can look for other ways to make each other feel less alone by simply being there in one of the most challenging times of our lives.

We will get through this time of uncertainty and look back in a couple of years at the students starting their own college experience, thankful we did ask if that classmate was okay.

Lauren Lamantia, a senior English major, is in her first year as co-chief copy editor for The Montclarion.

Green Energy, We're Not Quite There Yet



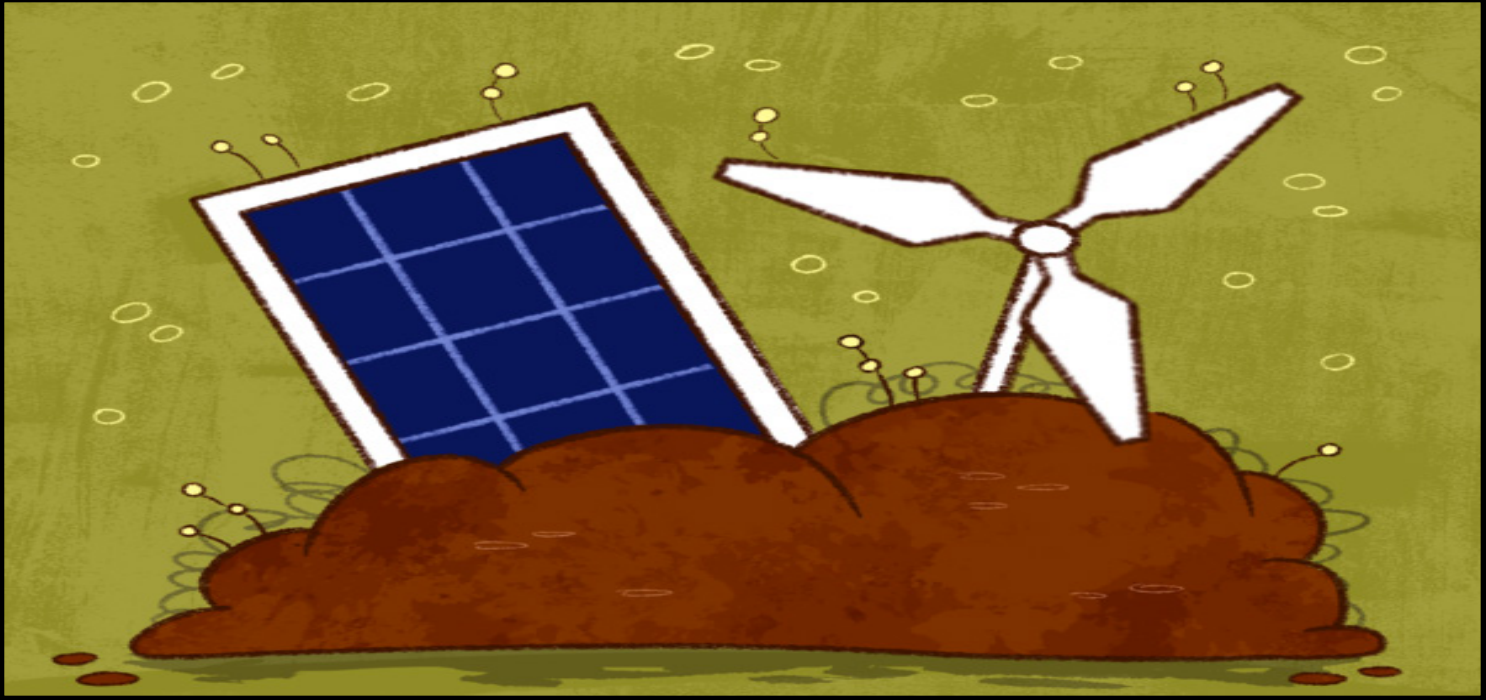
EKATERINA ZELENIN
STAFF WRITER

Environmentally speaking, green energy makes for an incredible solution to our problems regarding the use of fossil fuels. Putting economics aside, even with its high costs, green energy would eventually become profitable. Over time, the United States would see a surge in employment in energy-producing companies, which in the end could lead to greater investment.

The real problem is waste. The most widespread new forms of green energy are solar panels and wind turbines. While the panels are efficient and cost-friendly, getting rid of them is not. To recycle and burn the metals out of which panels are made requires the use of expensive incinerators in a time-consuming and painstakingly slow process.

In his article "Solar Panel Waste: The Dark Side of Clean Energy," author Conor Prendergast writes, "It's more convenient for solar companies to drop the dead panels into landfills or export them to third-world countries ... [which is hazardous as the metals in the panels] namely lead and cadmium — can leach out of the cells and get into groundwater," affecting plants, animals and humans.

An article on Bloomberg.com discusses a similar issue regarding wind



Ian Long | The Montclarion

turbine blades, which are simply discarded after use and left lying around. Nearly 8,000 are coming down over the next four years. If every country were to switch to wind energy with each nation discarding thousands of blades every year, the waste levels would become catastrophic.

Luckily, solutions are already being researched. China, in particular, has been replacing silicon with perovskite to create a cheaper panel consisting of nontoxic metals. Though the solar panels would still be costly to recycle, the risk of those being left for waste would be considerably less and their produc-

tion would be cheaper, leaving more money for companies to recycle the panels into the incinerators.

When it comes to turbines, 85% of the parts can be reused or recycled, but the fiberglass and colossal size of the blades makes this task difficult to achieve. Currently, one method of solving turbine waste is to break down these blades and press them into pellets or fiberboards used for flooring and walls. While the companies responsible for this are still relatively new, with the use of more green energy, they are expected to grow in accordance with demand.

As of right now, the top solutions are

still under works and have yet to be perfected. However, the fact that governments and companies have already found ways to reduce waste from green energy leaves room for a promising future and a bright green light at the end of the tunnel.

Ekaterina Zelenin, an undeclared freshman, is in her first year as a staff writer for The Montclarion.

New President, Same Old Mistakes



BROOKE ALVINE
CO-CHIEF COPY
EDITOR

for a better future and better country should be the main goal for any incoming president. While we may have just elected President Joe Biden, his first month in office has made me anything but hopeful.

Each time a new story is put out in reference to a decision by the Biden administration, whether it be about immigration reform or tensions in the Middle East, I find myself humming Tame Impala’s “New Person, Same Old Mistakes.”

President Biden seems to be evading the harsh criticism from media outlets typically seen during the Trump administration by simply being anyone but Donald Trump. On Feb. 22, President Biden reopened a child detention facility for migrant children in Carrizo Springs, Texas. Trump opened many of these facilities during his presidency and was immediately criticized by media outlets ranging from Elle Magazine to The New York Times for treating children like prisoners.

It seems the Biden administration forgot their campaign promises to undo

any hard-line immigration reform put in place by the previous administration and instead reopened something that Trump himself implemented. The idea that this detention facility will move away from a “law-enforcement approach” as stated by Mark Weber, a spokesperson for the Department of Health and Human Services, and instead focus on child welfare is simply unrealistic.

Biden has simply slapped a new sign

over the old one and expects the same media who criticized Trump to ignore the fact that regardless of intentions, a child in jail remains a child in jail.

Another “old mistake” within the Biden administration came on Feb. 26 with the authorization of yet another Syrian airstrike aimed to send a strong message to Iranian militants and their supporters.

With promises of bringing diplomacy back to the White House, President

Biden has again gone back on his word and continued the age-old American tradition of bombing the Middle East in search of peace.

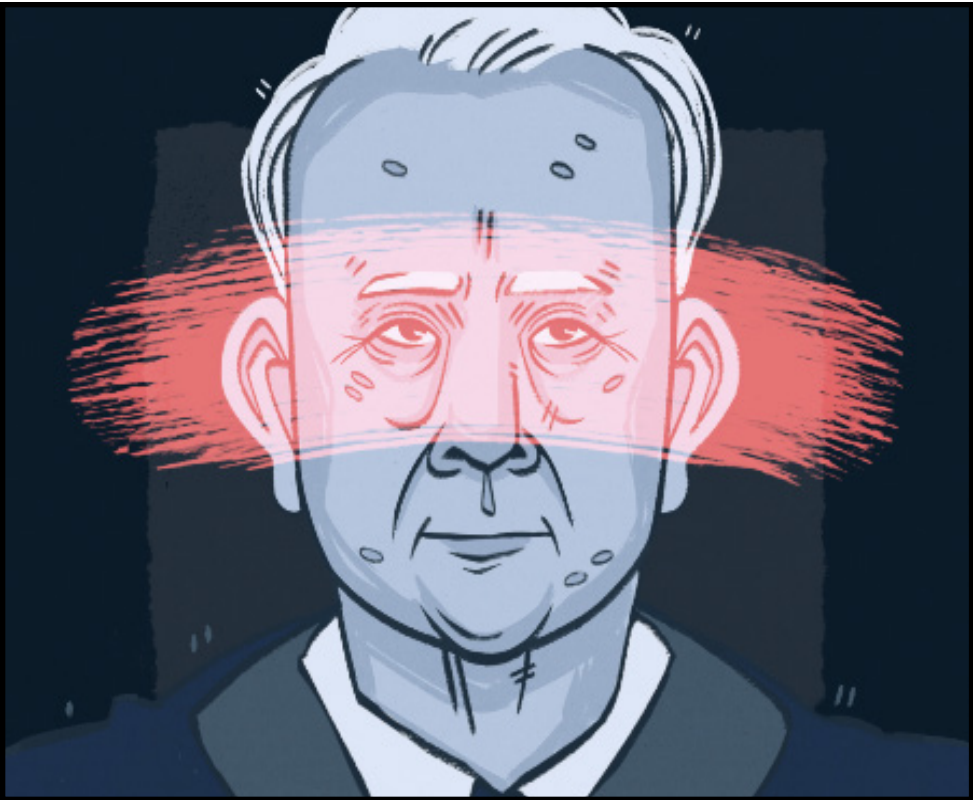
I am in no way supporting the actions of Trump, but his attacks were widely condemned by the media. Other than a few select newspapers like NPR and AP News, the story came and went and was forgotten almost instantly. Biden has once again escaped the hellfire awaiting him by just being silly, that is, old Biden and not a loose cannon Trump.

There is a pattern developing and it is one that will be increasingly hard to change the further we progress into Biden’s presidency. We need to hold presidents accountable for their actions regardless of their political party.

Simply being different than the last does not allow for the same errors to be repeated. Ignoring and excusing the actions of an administration because “things could be worse” is the worst possible way to pave a better future.

I want to remain hopeful and believe President Biden will take advice from progressives and not turn into another factory model president. However, I am reminded of the lyrics from Tame Impala’s song. “Man, I know it’s hard to digest. But maybe your story ain’t so different from the rest.”

Brooke Alvine, a senior history major, is in her first year as co-chief copy editor for The Montclarion.



Ian Long | The Montclarion

Andrew Cuomo 2024!

Disclaimer: This is a strictly satirical opinion piece that does not reflect the beliefs of The Montclarion in any way.



CHRIS GIACOMINI
STAFF WRITER

For those living under a rock, the 56th Governor of New York State, Andrew Cuomo, has been accused of sexual harassment by multiple women. Rather than just ignore the alle-

gations, Andy came out and answered like a true politician, categorically deflecting questions by the media and his peers. Considering the recent history of presidents number 45 and 46, this puts him right in line to be number 47. Well, 48 if Sleepy Joe enters his eternal slumber mid-term.

At least Anthony Weiner was somewhat expected solely based on his name. These Cuomo allegations came

out of nowhere. Well, they were initially brought up in December, but no one cared until another woman came forward at the end of February.

Now we sit at three and as they say, “Once is chance, twice is coincidence, third time’s a pattern.”

Hopefully no more women fall victim to the governor, as then my cliché saying would no longer apply.

Cuomo was born in Queens in 1957 to Matilda and Mario Cuomo, the latter of which, a lawyer, later became the 52nd Governor of New York. Throughout his reign, Andrew has been praised for his good old New York persona, never taking no for an answer.

As a New York-born Italian American, Cuomo was likely named for Saint Andrew, one of the apostles of the big man himself, Jesus Christ. Anyway, Saint Andrew’s brother was Saint Peter, the dude who guards Heaven’s gate to this day. For analogy’s sake, that would make Cuomo’s brother, CNN talking head Chris, the guardian of the gates. It will definitely be interesting to see the Cuomo Prime Time episode where they cover these allegations, as it may decide if Andrew gets his eternal salvation.

Keeping with my analogy, much like Saint Andrew served Jesus, Cuomo worked under another, more successful politician from 1993 to 2001, when he served in President Bill Clinton’s administration. All Cuomo has been doing is carrying on the teachings of his own savior.

All of these political ties should lead Cuomo directly into office, as they did in 2010 when President Barack Obama asked then Governor David Paterson to give way for the Cuomo train pulling into station.

We must keep in mind these allegations could just be a political ploy. Cuomo has been under fire for nearly a year due to his handling, or mishandling, of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. New York state currently leads the United States in pandemic-related deaths, thanks in no small part to his initiatives that forced nursing homes to treat COVID-19 patients. This led to numerous outbreaks, and unfortunately costing many seniors their lives.

Cuomo publishing a New York Times bestselling book about his actions during the pandemic rubbed me the wrong way. Titled “American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic,” the 300-plus page book was the first bestseller to be written entirely in crayon and is filled with illegible scribbles and features the word “None” 2,364 times.

I, for one, am looking forward to his next publication, titled “American Success: Leadership Lessons from a Lifetime of Failing Upwards” which will hopefully be written in the Oval Office.

Chris Giacomini, a junior communication & media arts major, is in his second year as a staff writer for The Montclarion.



Ian Long | The Montclarion



Thumbs Up

Montclair State University resumes athletic competition with limited fan attendance

Montclair State President Susan A. Cole announces anticipation for normal Fall 2021 semester

The Montclarion wins nine awards at NJPF College Newspaper Contest



Thumbs Down

Asian American community targeted in shootings in Atlanta, GA spas leaving eight killed

Mass shooting in Boulder, CO leaves ten killed, including one police officer

Two species of African elephants nearing extinction as rates of poaching and habitat damage are on the rise

WANT TO BE PART
OF SOMETHING
GREATER?

The Montclarion

Write for feature! Fashion writer wanted

Contact Montclarionfeature@gmail.com

Marvel Fans Need to Give ‘WandaVision’ a (West)View



“WandaVision” is a nine-episode series on Disney+.

Photo courtesy of Marvel Studios

Casey Masterson
Feature Editor

I have been a fan of Marvel Comics since I was a kid. So naturally, when the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) came about, I was ecstatic. I have my issues with the MCU and their comic accuracy, but overall, you will never find me skipping out on a movie. “WandaVision,” a new Disney+ series, has provided fans with a fun, tragic and Easter egg-filled look into the lives of two underused MCU characters.

As a lifelong fan of MCU, I’m partial to the Hulk and Doctor Strange, but the Avengers are also a favorite of mine. It was a delight seeing them on the big screen, but I was always left wanting more.

Comic inaccuracies aside, some characters, such as Wanda, played by Elizabeth Olsen, and Vision, played by Paul Bettany, were given the sideline. Despite them being such powerful assets, this choice gave more screen time to Iron Man and Captain America, played by A-listers Robert Downey Jr. and Chris Evans. I was excited to see that Wanda and Vision were finally being given their fair share of attention.

For those of you who are comic lovers, I feel the need to point out some influences. “The House of M” is a huge contributor to the series’ storyline, but other comic runs play an influential

role in the inspiration for “WandaVision.” Comics such as “Vision and the Scarlet Witch” and more loosely, “Avengers Disassembled” have their sway over the storyline. However, in typical MCU fashion, ideas and storylines are cherry-picked from each to create the final product.

“WandaVision” starts as a cute comedy, but slowly devolves into a rather dark tragedy. The full extent of Wanda’s powers are finally explained as we explore the town of Westview, where the series takes place. Vision is left to wonder both how he got to Westview and what is happening as the idyllic society starts to unravel.

As much as I loved this series, there were things that I found fault in. The MCU has a red herring problem, where they dangle comic references in front of fans before turning it on its head. In this show, the red herring is cinematic rather than comic-based and has the potential to leave a bad taste in the mouths of avid MCU fans. Comic lore is often ignored in the MCU, but toying with the hopes of habitual viewers would finally give them a taste of the comic fan’s misery.

I cannot tell you what this twist is, but I will say it left me highly disappointed. This red herring had such amazing potential to only end in a joke. This is not unlike the twist in “Iron



“WandaVision” starts out as a cute comedy, but slowly devolves into a rather dark tragedy.

Photo courtesy of Marvel Studios

Man 3,” where the comic villain Mandarin is revealed to be an actor.

With that being said, there is far more that I like about this show than not. One of the most common tropes are the references to other sitcoms. From “Bewitched” to “Modern Family,” the series parodies beloved American sitcoms. It’s fun to catch the references and even more fun to play “guess the show.”

My favorite part of this show is the dark aspect. Although initially subverted, darkness rears its ugly head and distorts the perfect world Wanda and Vision inhabit. Dark themes start as a whisper before they turn into overwhelming cries.

I’m no stranger to horror appreciation in The Montclarion, so it is sufficient to say that I was pleased with many of the show’s horror elements. To say what exactly was scary, however, would spoil the fun.

“WandaVision” is ultimately a show about grief and how people deal with it. This is something that most can empathize with, if not relate to their own experiences. The complex subject matter makes it hard to pin down one person to blame in the series, as it is

pointed in unexpected directions.

The Easter eggs, which are hidden references to the Marvel comic book series, are an important part of “WandaVision.” Most of these are given in the form of commercial breaks within the show, like the Strucker watch or Nexus depression medication. There are also more overt references, such as the Darkhold, a fictional grimoire stored in Sanctum Sanctorum in the comics.

This series may prove to be more than casual enjoyment. With so many connections and a few loose hanging threads, there is a strong possibility that “WandaVision” will be required viewing to understand upcoming Marvel films such as “Doctor Strange: Multiverse of Madness.” Olsen is slated to appear in this movie and many are speculating if the two MCU creations are connected, especially due to Doctor Strange’s notable absence from the series.

Overall, “WandaVision” provides an interesting insight into the lives of formerly underappreciated members of the Avengers. If you have a Disney+ account, I highly recommend giving this series a watch.



Elizabeth Olsen and Paul Bettany star in this Disney+ series.

Photo courtesy of Disney+

Director of Iconic Rom-Coms Donald Petrie Speaks to Montclair State Film Forum Class



Donald Petrie told stories from his life and gave tips to Montclair State students.

Photo courtesy of Anandaji Cruz Rosario

Anandaji Cruz Rosario
Contributing Writer

Donald Petrie, the director of iconic romantic comedies such as “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days” and “Miss Congeniality,” dropped in to speak to Montclair State University’s virtual film forum class on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

Listening to Petrie speak on his growth as a director was inspiring as I realized that the man behind the classic films was once just a college student who, at the time, did not know his path until he started acting towards his interests, just like many of us.

Petrie has directed many movies over the last few decades that will forever remain in the hearts of romantics.

“My movie is like a party,” Petrie said. “I’m the host. You’re my guest. I want everyone to feel free and have fun.”

I remember watching “Miss Congeniality” and loving the fact that Sandra Bullock plays a fierce and competent woman in a man’s world. Petrie’s films gained such traction due to his tendency to promote strong, autonomous women through his lead characters.

In “Mystic Pizza,” three young women go around societal norms to find their own identity and make their own paths without being stereotyped. In “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days,” a young journalist, played by Kate Hudson, wants to write about politics instead of men and handbags. In “Little Italy,” a young overachieving chef wishes for bigger things to happen in her career.

These films all exhibit different types of women in different job professions, cultures and environments, and they all have one thing in common: by the end of the film they find themselves in whatever way possible.

Throughout the class, Petrie told stories about his life and gave tips on becoming successful in the business.

Michael Groves, a junior film major at Montclair State, described the forum as an intimate conversation with a passionate filmmaker.

“Donald explained that the direc-

tor’s two biggest jobs are to listen and to make decisions,” Groves said. “He was more than willing to answer any questions the class brought up and I hope he comes back to Montclair [State] soon.”

An interesting fact he shared with the class was that he was not the original director of “Miss Congeniality.” After receiving the original script, which was simply a comedy about pageants, he decided he did not like it. Five drafts later, he finally said he wanted a Mel Gibson, tough as nails, little, crazy FBI agent and that in order to do a man’s job in a man’s world, she would need to go undercover.

From there, Petrie said all they did was write and shoot.

Isabella Wnek, a sophomore communications and media arts major at Montclair State, spoke highly about the director.

“I found Donald Petrie to be a very passionate and enthusiastic director whose greatest effort is to create critically-acclaimed projects,” Wnek said. “I

really liked how he values each of his crew and cast members to create the best film he possibly can.”

It is evident that Petrie was meant for show business, as he says he loves the spontaneity of his job and the fact that every single movie is a new story even if we all know the guy ends up with the girl. According to him, he likes his work to have some kind of grounding to reality, even in the humor.

“Once you are deemed an expert at something, it means you know how it’s used to be done,” Petrie said. “Learn how to learn [and] learn how to have a passion for learning as you become a student for the rest of your life.”

By the end, the film forum class had a lot away to take away from the discussion.

Petrie has a lot of wisdom to share that does not only radiate through his demeanor, but also through the countless films he has directed, portraying young women who rebel against stereotypical norms by paving their own paths in life.



Petrie with Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey on the set of “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days.”

Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

Top Picks to Stream

Best of March Edition

‘Zack Snyder’s Justice League’ on HBO Max



Photo courtesy of Marvel Studios

DC fans are in for a treat. After previously needing to step down from the original film as director, DC has allowed Zack Snyder to release a new four-hour-long “Justice League” film. “Zack Snyder’s Justice League” brings justice to the film as it changes almost everything that the 2017 version did and you can stream it now on HBO Max.

It takes a much darker route while having some light-hearted moments. With better story arcs for other DC heroes such as The Flash and Cyborg, while also moving further with Batman and Superman’s storylines which were previously shown in “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice,” this film will not disappoint.

“Zack Snyder’s Justice League” mainly stars Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, Cyborg, The Flash and Aquaman as they team up to face off against the antagonist, Steppenwolf.

For the full review, check out The Montclarion website.

- Alex Centeno
Staff Writer

‘Firefly Lane’ on Netflix



Photo courtesy of Netflix

If you are in need of a pick-me-up or a simple reminder of how much you love your best friend, be sure to check out one of Netflix’s latest dramas, “Firefly Lane.” The ten-episode series follows Tully Hart, played by Katherine Heigl, and Kate Mulroney, played by Sarah Chalke, as they navigate through 30 years of friendship together.

Beginning from 14 years old and lasting until their early forties, we see the highs and lows in which this dynamic duo endures together. The show will have you laughing one minute and crying the next. Also, the interesting editing format will keep you consistently engaged.

Check out the full review on The Montclarion website.

- Sam Nungesser
Entertainment Editor

WMSC Recognized Nationwide with Four Awards



Kaya Maciak (left), Anabella Poland (center) and Josh Tirado (right) sit in the WMSC studio.

Photo courtesy of Mike Peters

Megan Lim

Assistant Entertainment Editor

Students and their organizations are not unfamiliar with the struggles of online conferencing platforms, but even lagged internet connection, defective audio and other nuances could not hinder the joy of Montclair State University’s college radio station WMSC when they recently won four national awards.

WMSC joined together for a Zoom viewing party of the 2021 Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Media Awards on Saturday, March 6, where they were announced winners of four out of 12 nominations.

The first of the six boxes in the Zoom call, outlined with a bright green light, captured WMSC General Manager Anabella Poland’s voice as it rang with excitement.

Poland’s quick internet connection allowed her the privilege of hearing many of the night’s awards ahead of her team, including WMSC’s win of Best College Radio Station in the Nation out of colleges with more than 10,000 students.

By also serving as faculty advisor and continuously collaborating with students, administration, faculty and alumni to establish WMSC’s presence, Poland had the personal satisfaction of overseeing the organization’s operation leading up to the award.

Those collaborating with Poland at the station feel that her guidance is what motivated them to step up and overcome the difficulties of remote operation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

News Director Louis Biondolillo, a junior television and digital media major, expressed how grateful WMSC was to have Poland by their side.

“If it weren’t for her, no one would have pushed us to produce our best content,” Biondolillo said. “And we would not have this award either.”

Poland has dedicated her mission solely to the students of Montclair

State by enabling their skill development in radio programming and production.

“Their development and ability to grow confident into the broadcast arts is my product,” Poland said. “And these wins confirmed that when you know your mission and vision, it is easy to create a successful roadmap for your operations.”

Poland feels the achievement signifies she is where she is meant to be, identifying each student’s unique strength, mentoring it and nourishing it.

One of these students includes Station Manager Josh Tirado, a senior television and digital media major with a concentration in audio and sound design, whose work for “WMSC Rewind” was recognized through the award for Best Use of Sound Effects. Tirado also won Best Program Director for his time holding the position last semester.

Along with the title of program director came Tirado’s personal commitment to the station, working over 20 hours a week. This included managing content, overseeing more than 20 shows and training apprentice DJs, which he balanced amid his obligations to classes and life during the pandemic.

Tirado recalled his times editing audio and collecting award submissions in the WMSC office until 3 a.m.

“Each year we’d get a good amount of nominations out of the thirty plus pieces we’d submit, but we’d never win the big one,” Tirado said. “So to finally take home this award in my final year with the station is like poetic justice.”

Tirado’s contributions to WMSC’s success do not go unnoticed by his peers.

Associate Program Director Ashley Koutras, a junior television and digital media major with a concentration in audio and sound design, is astonished by the time and effort Tirado puts into the organization.

“He is so dedicated to the station,

it’s crazy,” Koutras said. “I wouldn’t be able to pick another person for [station manager].”

In hoping to one day become station manager herself is current Program Director Kaya Maciak, a junior communication and media arts major.

Maciak won Best Business Director in recognition of her time last semester leading the newsletter, drafting press releases, planning and executing events and taking on secretarial work and countless other tasks.

Maciak’s capability and dedication to WMSC are evident to those who work alongside her.

“She is very on top of things and has always been like that,” Koutras said. “If there’s anything to do with the station, she knows it.”

Maciak views her and the team’s achievements as a testimony to their hard work, as well as indicative of the potential she will have in the media industry in the future. She thanks her closest friends at the station for their support and emphasizes the talent and intelligence of each student leader.

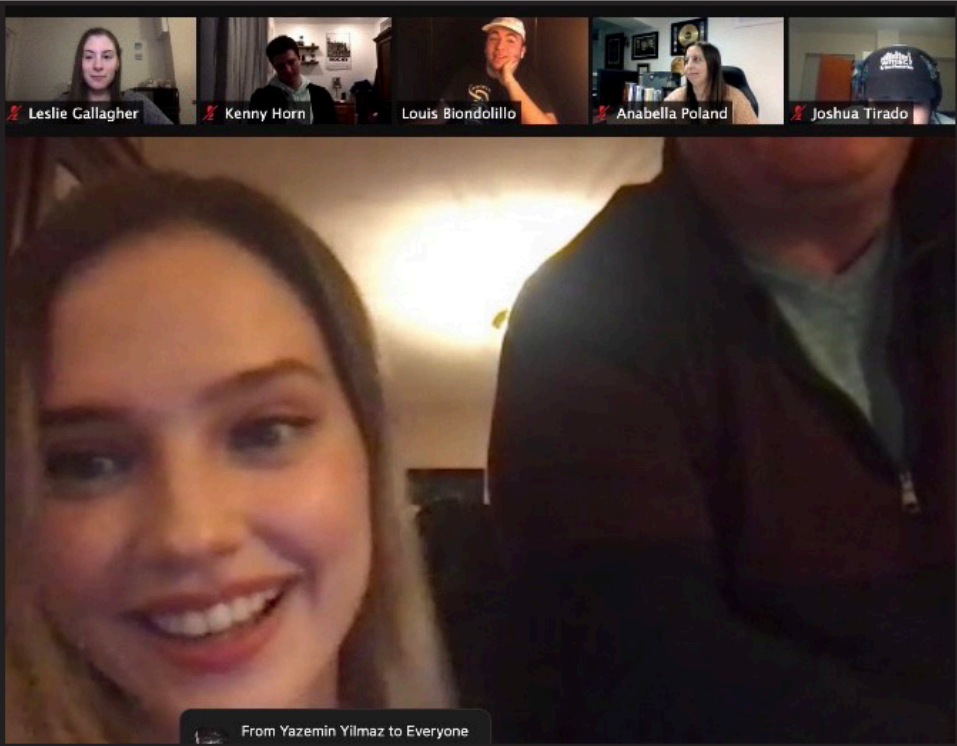
“It’s been such a privilege to work with a tight-knit family,” Maciak said. “Because they inspire me every single day.”

The intimate, familial environment created at WMSC, in combination with each member’s spontaneity, creativity and steadfast commitment to the success of the station, has resulted in nationwide recognition. But more importantly, it yielded an even more inspired, passionate group of students ready to use these accomplishments as fuel to continue producing exceptional content they are proud of.

With the same work etiquette, tenacity and zeal as the past semester, it is no surprise that WMSC is already setting new goals and has their eyes on future prizes.

When asked what he would like to say to his fellow team members on their achievements, it’s safe to say Tirado’s response is representative of WMSC’s unmistakable determination.

“We did it,” Tirado said. “Keep up the hard work. Let’s go back to back [with awards].”



Kaya Maciak and members of WMSC joined together for a Zoom viewing party of the 2021 IBS Media Awards.

Photo courtesy of Kaya Maciak

Mountain V Productions Provides Professional Film Experience for College Students



Chris Kong (right) served as director of photography on the production of “Pandemic Fix.”

Photo courtesy of Mountain V Productions

Alex Centeno
Staff Writer

Mountain V Productions is a film and television production company specializing in the creation of high-end, quality content delivered through the collaboration of its founders and college students, many of whom come from Montclair State University.

The company was founded in 2019 by Michael Bergendorff after having a career in business administration, sales and marketing for over 15 years. Despite no prior exposure to the film industry, his knowledge and business experience gave him the ability to develop the production company in Denmark.

In 2020, Bergendorff became a marketer and producer for Mountain V Productions. He then partnered up with Matt Barbieri, who graduated from Montclair State in 2010 with a bachelor’s degree in psychology.

Barbieri later decided to pursue a career as an actor. It was not until he joined Mountain V Productions that he strengthened his profession in acting and producing, while simultaneously focusing his talents on writing short and feature-length screenplays.

“Partnering with Mountain V Productions has been an amazing experience,” Barbieri said. “I am so proud to work with fellow Montclair [State] students and graduates who know how to collaborate well with respect and professionalism.”

Together, Bergendorff and Barbieri have agreed to place a company philosophy concerning gender equality on the independent film productions coming out this year.

After their first production in the US, they have supported writer-producer-and-director students from Sarah Lawrence College by forming contracts with writers and consulting with them on thesis projects for optimizing production and reducing cost.

The company has since then expanded its network by hiring writers and editors across the US and Europe, while also growing their network for distribution agreements. Mountain V Productions gathered a crew of college graduate students, some from

Montclair State, through job applications from LinkedIn and from official IMDb pages or referrals.

The company puts considerable time into pre-production for each project in order to create their content in a steady and swift manner, while still maintaining convenience for both the cast and crew.

Even during these complicated times with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Mountain V perseveres in growing as a company by having made two independent short films in 2020, “Pandemic Fix” and “Gateway City - Last Chance,” both created under the safety regulations put in place by New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy.

These short films have been submitted to various film festivals. The first film, “Pandemic Fix,” received a nomination for Best Comedy Short at the Indie Short Fest in Los Angeles and an honorable mention for Best Comedy at the New York Movie Awards.

The second film, “Gateway City - Last Chance,” has received several honorable mentions including Best Indie Short by the Florence Film Awards. The film also won two awards for Best Director at the New York Movie Awards, as well as Best Male Foreign Actor at the CKF International Film Festival.

The Hollywood Gold Awards nom-

inated Brendan Laird, who recently graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University with a film degree, for Best Post Production Sound for his work as sound mixer on “Gateway City - Last Chance.”

“Mountain V Productions helped me get started on my career and helped me rekindle my passion that was wavering for a few months,” Laird said. “I am excited for the many productions that are in the horizon.”

Laird has a passion for filmmaking and appreciates Mountain V for allowing him to show his full potential.

“Since working on those projects, I have been able to find more work than I was anticipating,” Laird said.

After applying through LinkedIn, Chris Kong, a senior filmmaking major at Montclair State, has worked with Mountain V Productions as a crew member for their last two short films and is working with them on a project currently in development.

Kong has gained much production experience at Montclair State and has used it during his time as a gaffer when setting up lights for one of the company’s films, specifically for “Pandemic Fix.” He was also in charge of cinematography as director of photography for “Gateway City - Last Chance.”

“Mountain V Productions came out of the gates with a lot of passion and is

really trying to hit the ground running with a lot of new projects,” Kong said. “Definitely look out for them in the future since they helped me jumpstart my career.”

Mountain V has proven to be beneficial for people that work with them, as the company grants students both current students and college graduates with professional experience needed in the film industry. Crew members are also offered a percentage of the proceeds made from their feature projects.

After graduating from Montclair State in 2020 with a degree in acting, Abbey George reached out to the company through Backstage, a casting website, and starred in a film currently in development.

“It is a great opportunity to be able to find work from Mountain V in this field after graduating,” George said. “They’re definitely aiming high in the industry.”

The company has reserved plans to make more films and documentaries for 2021 and beyond. They even have another short film currently in production.

Mountain V Productions opens the door for filmmakers from Montclair State and other colleges to further pursue their passion in the art of filmmaking.



A behind-the-scenes look on the set of “Gateway - Last Chance.”

Photo courtesy of Mountain V Productions

‘Framing Britney Spears’ Gives Fans a Taste of a Poisonous Paradise



Britney Spears’ career and conservatorship is highlighted by the new Hulu documentary, “Framing Britney Spears.”

Photo courtesy of FX

James Griffin
Contributing Writer

“Framing Britney Spears,” the sixth episode of “The New York Times Presents,” premiered Feb. 5 on FX and Hulu, giving its audience a glimpse into the tumultuous life and career of the reigning princess of pop, Britney Spears. The episode spans from her beginnings to the current court battle against her father, Jamie Spears, to remain in control of her life.

The documentary revolves around conservatorships, a legal concept the documentary defines as, “a person, official or institution designated to take over and protect the interests of an incompetent.” Though unfamiliar to most people, Britney Spears understands the term all too well as she has been under one since 2008.

Despite being unauthorized by Britney Spears and her team, the documentary is well-informed and carefully differentiates fact and speculation. This is due to the many interviews conducted with people who worked closely with the singer, in addition to reporters, legal experts and activist fans of the #FreeBritney movement, a growing campaign that calls to remove Jamie Spears as her conservator.

A major key to the entertainment, credentials and heart of the documentary is Britney Spears’ bubbly and sweet lifelong friend and former personal assistant, Felicia Culotta.

Culotta’s description of Britney Spears and the memories they shared brings the audience into their relationship. The unseen personal photos and tour memorabilia around Culotta’s humble home convinces the audience that she genuinely loves and cares about the pop star, allowing us to trust her and the documentary itself.

Going beyond just entertaining and informing audiences, the film has majorly influenced the public’s realization that what was once considered socially acceptable in the media has changed.

The documentary rightfully calls out journalist Diane Sawyer’s brutal 2003 ABC interview, as well as singer and actor Justin Timberlake’s unfair incrimination and public humiliation of Britney Spears for personal gain after their high-profile breakup in 2002. Sawyer and Timberlake have recently been called on to apologize to Britney

Spears for their behavior, in which Timberlake delivered in a social media post nearly a week after the film’s release.

The documentary wisely makes a point to show how far the media and society has come when discussing mental health and treating celebrities. In 2007, the world only voiced what was wrong with Britney Spears and rooted for her unraveling. Everyone who watches this film must thankfully say to themselves, “this would never happen today.”

With so much information to fit into a run time of one hour and 15 minutes, the editors succeeded in concisely incorporating the highlights of Britney Spears’ early career into the first half of the film. The events documented were satisfyingly organized into segments titled by the year that they happened, gradually building up the drama and anticipation for the inevitable downfall to come.

The footage of performances and lighthearted interviews about the success of the singer’s earlier days set a powerful contrast against the terrifying and cringeworthy footage that capture her being swarmed by paparazzi.

It is incredible to hear such rare insight from retired paparazzo Daniel Ramos, who admits that getting sucked into the business made him lose empathy for celebrities.

Ramos also mentions Britney Spears’ cousin and former assistant, Alli Sims, who was with her the night she famously struck Ramos’ car with an umbrella. After the film was released, Sims came forward with information that would have been useful for the documentary.

Sims revealed she has not had any contact with her cousin since the conservatorship was put in place in 2008, when Jamie Spears threatened Sims to stay away from his daughter.

One of the most significant shots in the documentary features former Senior Director of Marketing at Jive Records, Kim Kaiman, who also discussed an unpleasant interaction with Jamie Spears. After sharing, the camera cuts back to reveal she and other interviewees were filmed in front of a tiny backdrop in a big, empty, dingy studio warehouse.

This is in contrast to the bright, natural lighting against the wall covered in greenery and colorful flowers, which originally led viewers to believe filming occurred outside in a lovely garden.

Only lasting for a second, this shot is a powerful visual metaphor for the ugly truth behind the carefully curated, beautiful image of Britney Spears.

Between concerning moments of Britney Spears’ well-being and courtroom failures are clips of silly videos and posts the singer is known for sharing on social media. The shining, happy image she shares with fans balances with the less fun conservatorship drama to create ambivalence.

The documentary purposefully creates a confusing perspective on the situation to deprive viewers of a satisfying ending. There are no real answers, and the film does not pretend to have them.

Though The New York Times does not force a certain narrative into viewers’ heads, it presents both sides of the situation: Britney Spears wanting to replace her father as conservator and Jamie Spears’ argument for remaining in the position.

The editors helpfully minimized the legal jargon surrounding the court battles by including easy to understand explanations from lawyer Vivian Lee Thoreen, who went on to join Jamie Spears’ defense team following her interview for the documentary.

Thoreen recently defended Jamie Spears on Good Morning America, claiming him to be a dedicated and loving father who has his daughter’s best interest at heart despite her multiple attempts to refuse him as her conservator.

The interviews with the creators of the #FreeBritney movement and popular Instagram account “Britney’s

Gram,” Barbara Gray and Tess Barker, seem a bit unnecessary since the movement was initially based on speculation and unauthorized facts. However, it provides footage of fans talking about their concern and admiration for Britney Spears, someone that has helped them come into their identity and overcome the stigma of mental health.

It added to credible sources of former backup dancer Kevin Tancharoen and conservative-specialized lawyer Adam Streisand’s refreshing portrayal of Britney Spears as a creative, capable and competent artist.

The documentary was well-intentioned and well-executed, but is limited by its time frame. It is easy to forget that such a monumental topic and popular film is only an episode of a bigger, unrelated series. The story requires more opportunity to make an impression, which an hour and 15 minutes does not allow.

Luckily, the film’s success sparked an upcoming Netflix documentary centered around the same topic that has potential to be even bigger.

“Framing Britney Spears” successfully enlightens audiences on Britney Spears’ conservatorship situation, as well as conservatorship abuse, mental health stigma and the toxicity of celebrity culture.

Hopefully soon, Britney Spears will be able to further enlighten us on these issues.

“I know at some point she will tell her story,” Culotta said at the end of the documentary. “Everything will fall into place.”



Felicia Culotta is Britney Spears’ longtime friend and former assistant.

Photo courtesy of Felicia Culotta



The #FreeBritney movement is a campaign that calls to remove Jamie Spears as the singer’s conservator.

Photo courtesy of FX

The Montclarion

"In America, the President reigns for four years,
but Journalism governs forever." – Oscar Wilde

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This Week In Red Hawk Sports	
THU 4/1	No games
FRI 4/2	Football vs. William Paterson University 6 p.m.
SAT 4/3	Baseball at Ramapo College 11:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. Women's Lacrosse vs. The College of New Jersey 12 p.m. Softball vs. Stockton University 1 p.m., 3 p.m. Women's Basketball vs. New Jersey City University 3 p.m. Men's Lacrosse vs. Stockton University 7 p.m.
SUN 4/4	No games
MON 4/5	No games
TUE 4/6	Softball at Rutgers-Newark 3 p.m., 5 p.m. Women's Lacrosse at Kean University 4:30 p.m.
WED 4/7	No games

Brown's Shot of the Year Leads to NJAC Championship Appearance for Women's Basketball

Red Hawks will face NJCU in NJAC Championship Game



The Red Hawks huddle up before their Feb. 12th contest against Kean University.

Photo courtesy of Julia Radley

Trent Freeman
Contributing Writer

There's 31 seconds on the clock. The Montclair State University women's basketball team is clinging to a one-point lead against Kean University. Senior guard Taylor Brown catches a pass at the top of the arc, then takes a step and shoots. With the ball in the air, the Panzer Athletic Center holds its breath.

The limited capacity gymnasium erupts as the three-ball swishes through the net, marking the last points scored in the game and the final nail in the coffin. The Red Hawks 56-52 victory sealed their trip to the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) championship game for the second year in a row.

"I knew we needed something big to happen," Brown said. "The confidence that my whole team has in me, they kept

telling me to shoot all game."

The women's basketball team willed that shot to go in just as they willed themselves to the championship game. This win marks their eighth straight victory and their fifth at home.

The Red Hawks played their best when the whole team was involved. This was in part due to head coach Karin Harvey's message at halftime when Montclair State left the second quarter down 27-23, having only scored one point in the last five minutes.

"Coach was just saying we never played like that," Red Hawks freshman guard Kendall Hodges said. "It was an individual game; we didn't look like Montclair State women's basketball and we didn't feel like it either."

Hodges led all scorers with an impressive 16 points, including the first of the game

by either team by knocking down a wide-open three. The freshman also accrued five rebounds and two steals to her credit.

Montclair State benefited from stellar defensive play all game. The leader of this disruptive unit was junior guard Trisha Peterson. Peterson racked up five rebounds, two blocks and led the Red Hawks with three steals.

"My mindset changed a lot this year as far as defending goes," Peterson said. "I knew this game when (Taylor) got into foul trouble, I knew I needed to step up and really bring the intensity on defense."

Key contributions and hustle plays from junior guard Julia Sutton helped keep it close when Montclair State struggled. Entering the contest, the Red Hawks' scoring leader tallied two steals and a handful of taken charges.

Though the gym was at limited capacity, you would not know by the volume of those in attendance. The fans in the stands made themselves heard and it was not lost on the players.

"The stands weren't completely filled but they might as well have been," Hodges said. "The family that came out to this game, they're the best. They're the best fans."

The women's basketball team will host New Jersey City University in the NJAC Championship game on April 3rd. Harvey believes this year will have a different conclusion than last season, when Montclair State lost 64-54 to Rowan University.

"We choked... let's be honest," Harvey said. "I think this team is different, they've worked really hard and win or lose we won't choke. I can guarantee you that. These guys are tough."



Senior guard Taylor Brown hit the game-winning shot against Kean.

Photo courtesy of Julia Radley



Junior guard Julia Sutton tries for a layup after being fouled.

Photo courtesy of Julia Radley

Red Hawk Recap

Red Hawks Baseball: 12 New Jersey City University: 3	Red Hawks Volleyball: 3 Kean University: 0	Red Hawks Men's Lacrosse: 19 Susquehanna University: 8	Red Hawks Baseball: 11 New Jersey City University: 10
Red Hawks Volleyball: 0 Stockton University: 3	Red Hawks Field Hockey: 2 Stockton University: 1	Red Hawk Baseball: 7 Stockton University: 4	Red Hawks Women's Soccer: 4 William Paterson University: 1

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**THE WORLD
WITHOUT
NEWS
WOULD BE...**



Photo courtesy of wikipedia.org.

Head Coach Karin Harvey's Legacy Only Grows with Her 300th Career Victory

A look at her legacy at Montclair State University



Harvey and her team celebrate the Red Hawks' sixth straight NJAC title at Panzer Athletic Center on Feb. 23, 2018.

Ben Caplan | *The Montclarion*

Jess Liptzin
Assistant Sports Editor

On Feb. 12, when the buzzer sounded and Montclair State University women's basketball won their third game of the season against Kean University, it was also a memorable night for head coach Karin Harvey. Having been a head coach for 14 seasons has culminated in 300 career victories.

The moment after she won the game was what really defined this milestone for her. The entire team had created posters for the end of the game and were happy to be a part of their coach's historic win. In fact, they seemed just as excited about the accomplishment as if it was their own.

Harvey said it was a great experience and that it felt good to look back on the events leading up to this moment.

"When you accomplish something like that it gives you an opportunity to reflect back on your years," Harvey said. "What I really think about is all the players and the coaches that I have worked with over my time. It's a nice trip down memory lane."

It all started in 2006 when Harvey was first given the opportunity to be head coach of Drew University's women's basketball team. To this day, the 2006-07 season is the program's greatest season, in her only year as Drew's head coach.

The next season, she started her reign as the Red Hawks' head coach. She brought along one of her players on that Drew team as well. Courtney Cunningham, the associate head coach of the team, has been by Harvey's side for 13 seasons now.

"She had something that most of the coaches I had throughout my life just didn't have," Cunningham said. "She had that drive and ability to make a team so much better than they were. Just the individual talent a team had... she can really up it."

That Drew team still holds a special place in Harvey's heart, along with the 2015 Red Hawks women's basketball team that made the Final Four. Recently, a former star player from the 2015 team returned to the program, as Katie Sire joined the coaching staff as an assistant coach/recruiting coordinator.

"Transitioning from one of her players to now [being] her assistant, one of the things I've noticed that coach Harvey consistently brings to her teams is how much she cares and always has her players back," Sire said. "Coach Harvey does a great job at building relationships with her players which makes for a more enjoyable team environment every day."

Harvey's coaching style is unique. She is able to draw the line between a respectable coach and a friend for someone to talk to, allowing for a team dynamic unlike any other.

Senior captain and guard, Taylor Brown, appreciates what Harvey always brings to the team outside of basketball.

"She did a really great job of showing me what it is like to have a coach, but also a really great friend," Brown said. "She cares about what is going on in our personal lives and makes sure we know that we can go to her for anything."

This played a major role in the bonding of the team and making sure all coaches and players understand each other. This is also part of the reason behind Harvey's success in the standards she and her coaches hold for their teams.

"Regardless of the talent level, or what players we return, or how experienced the team is, she always demands the same thing from each team," Sire said. "We have our philosophy [Defend, Rebound, Run] and she gets every team to buy into that mindset, as well as play hard. She knows

that's how she can have success with different teams year after year."

Harvey would say it herself, that this was not just her win, but that it belongs to everyone who has played a major role in the teams she has coached. From coaches to players to medical staff, especially this season, it is all a team effort from both Drew and Montclair State.

"All of them have helped in one way or another," Harvey said. "Courtney has been my assistant for 13 years so the impact that she has had on the program you can't measure. Another is Brian Sampson, a former assistant. There has been a ton of players throughout the program and throughout my time that have just had a huge impact."

The relationships made through coaching is what Harvey has cherished along the way. It is what keeps her motivated and wanting success for every one of her players as much as they do. Her ability to push players beyond their limits is one of a kind and a crucial reason for her 14-year streak of winning seasons.

In that time, she has nearly a .750 winning percentage and seven NCAA Division III Tournament appearances. She has been the conference coach of the year six times and is a five-time Women's Basketball Coaches Association Regional Coach of the Year. She has also coached multiple All-Americans.

"She's never really content when it comes to getting better," Cunningham said. "I think what's really unique in all of her years, even with her success she always finds a way to be better."

Even during this coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic-stricken season, Harvey and the team overcame all obstacles to clinch the number one seed in the New Jersey Athletic Conference tournament. Her success is still continuing this very second while her 300 wins is a thing of the past.

However, it is those accomplishments that not only allow you to celebrate, but as Harvey mentioned, an even more rewarding feeling is a chance to reflect on the people and journey it took to get here.



Harvey and Katie Sire hold up their individual awards given to them in the 2016-2017 season.

Photo courtesy of Katie Sire

Former Women’s Lacrosse Star Kyle Graver Joins Coaching Staff

Former three-time captain hopes to make an impact as a coach



Graver is introduced as a starter during the team’s 2020 season opener against Farmingdale State.

Corey Annan | The Montclarion

Corey Annan
Sports Editor

While numerous athletes at Montclair State University decided to take their fifth year of eligibility this season due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic canceling their previous season, former women’s lacrosse player Kyle Graver chose otherwise.

“I was upset about our season being canceled but I also wanted to get my career started,” Graver said. “I talked to my coaches, parents and my fellow captains [Sydnee Sapp and Amanda Maguire] about it and we decided it was best to move on.”

So, she did just that. Graver, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry but is considering furthering her education, found a job at a lab part time after college. But the itch to remain involved with the sport was still there.

While she had decided not to come back as a player, coaching lacrosse would help fill the void of not competing anymore.

“I coached for a girls club team called 380Lacrosse for the past few years,” Graver said. “I did it during the summer and my coaches knew I

was involved with that. I got in touch with [head coach Nicol Parcelluzzi] and told her that I was still in the Clifton area since my job is still here and [that] I can come help out with the team.”

The decision to bring her along was not a hard one, according to head coach Nicol Parcelluzzi.

“She’s the only three-time captain that I have ever coached,” Parcelluzzi said. “As a player, I always had confidence in her and she acted [as] an extension of the coaching staff on and off the field. Now, we are lucky to have her on the sidelines.”

Graver got the official position as assistant coach in October 2020 and has successfully made the transition from player to coach. Not returning for her fifth season was something that weighed heavily on her mind at first, but coaching has allowed her to stay connected with a program that she cares deeply about.

“I could see myself coaching here and there in the future; and getting a coaching job at a program like ours is going to be helpful in the [long run],” Graver said. “But as for me coming back to the sport, I wasn’t totally ready to give up on lacrosse. My best friends

are on this team.”

As for her coaching experience thus far, Graver has loved it. As a coach, she can give more of a player’s perspective on the game that’s easier for her former teammates to grasp.

“Because I’m so newly out of lacrosse, it’s easy for me to take what I would do in a game situation and relay it to other people,” Graver said. “I think the girls on the team respect what I have to say because they know what I would do on the field.”

When a recently graduated player becomes a coach, one might wonder how their relationships with their teammates might change. For the players, it could be an awkward adjustment seeing your former teammate coaching you up on the sidelines during games and practices.

For a young coach, it can be tough to not only earn the respect of your former teammates in your new role, but also maintain a professional and personal relationship with them.

However, Graver has spent a lot of time with her former teammates on and off the field and has earned the respect of the entire locker room. This has not changed since becoming coach.

“I feel like my relationship with my former teammates isn’t very different for me,” Graver said. “I’ve always seen myself as the same person. My friends on the team don’t view me any differently either, but they also wouldn’t disrespect me and they listen to what I have to say. I know these girls and what they are thinking in their heads. When someone is down about having a rough day, I can be more personable with them.”

Graver explained how she uses her experience as a player to discuss strategies and game plans with the team.

“I feel like I understand the team dynamic more than other coaches because I competed with them,” Graver said. “As a player, I always said that my strongest asset was my game sense.

Bringing that into coaching is all you really need. I see the game from a [player’s perspective], so I know that it will help the players when I can relay that message to them during practice and off the field.”

Meghan Mahlstadt was the only senior from last year’s team to return as a player in 2021. She and Graver have been best friends throughout their playing careers and were both captains last season.

Mahlstadt believes that her coaching style works very well with the team.

“Kyle’s personality on and off the field isn’t much different in my opinion, which I respect,” Mahlstadt said. “She doesn’t try to sugarcoat anything or pretend to be a big scary coach just because she has the title of one. She is fun and happy when it’s appropriate and professional in the right situations and is authentically herself every day.”

The Red Hawks entered the 2021 season having never won the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) in their program history. They also have not won a conference title since 2013. This a goal that the team has their sights set on with most of their starters returning.

While the entire team hopes to achieve their dream of winning an NJAC title this season, Graver’s biggest priority is making sure the players leave the program with no regrets.

“For the players, I want to make sure that they are making the most of their opportunities and time here, something that I wish I did,” Graver said. “Once it’s gone, it’s gone and you’re never going to be able to get it back. There are girls on this team who never really had a shot, whether [that be because] they were injured or had other [circumstances]. They are going to be known this year. So many of our big stars have left and it’s their time to shine. I want to make sure that they get that spotlight.”



From left to right: Sapp, Graver, Mahlstadt and Maguire pose for a photo during a 2019 team photoshoot at Sprague Field.

Photo courtesy of Mario Papa

Erin Blanchfield Continues to Work Towards Her MMA Dreams

Meet the Montclair State student who is taking the MMA fighting scene by storm



Erin Blanchfield walks around the cage after her Invicta FC 39 fight with Victoria Leonardo.

Photo courtesy of Erin Blanchfield

Maxwell Strauss
Staff Writer

On Feb. 7, 2020, inside a room before a mixed martial arts (MMA) fight, a fighter gets ready. She is one of three people with her coach and father alongside her.

Instead of plugging her headphones or earbuds into her phone, she enjoys listening to the sound in the room. Eventually, Erin Blanchfield walks into the MMA cage located at Memorial Hall in Kansas City, Missouri, and the fight begins.

She wins by a second round knockout with punches after a head kick against Victoria Leonardo.

"I talked about it with my coach, [Victoria] dropped her left shoulder, so I went left jab left kick instead of kicking with my right," Erin Blanchfield said.

Erin Blanchfield is a female mixed martial arts fighter with

a background in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. She is from Elmwood, New Jersey, but is fighting out of New York City and Renzo Gracie Academy. At just 20 years old, Erin Blanchfield is in the flyweight weight class (125 lbs.) and fights in the Invicta Fighting Championships division.

She currently is on a three-match winning streak after defeating Brogan Walker-Sanchez in her last fight on July 30, 2020, by unanimous decision at Invicta FC 41.

Erin Blanchfield started with mixed martial arts at a young age. At only seven, she started training in jiu-jitsu and competing in kickboxing and grappling tournaments.

"I got into martial arts when I was 7 years old," Erin Blanchfield said. "My brother was training and I went in to watch him and was offered a free class. I fell in love with the training and got into compet-

ing soon after."

Erin Blanchfield's upbringing was different from other kids her age, as her focus was on MMA fighting.

"My childhood was different in the sense that I never played any school sports," Erin Blanchfield said. "I spent a lot of my time training, competing and my family and I would travel in the summers to visit other gyms in California and Florida."

Being surrounded by MMA fighters throughout her childhood inspired her to pursue a career in the sport.

"There were always MMA fighters at the gyms I trained at growing up," Erin Blanchfield said. "I always looked up to them. Once the UFC [Ultimate Fighting Championship] opened up women's divisions, I knew fighting MMA was what I wanted to do."

Currently, Erin Blanchfield is training six days a week. Luckily, her trainers have been familiar faces for years.

"I've been training with my striking coach Augie Matias since I was 15 and my jiu-jitsu coach Frankie Roberts since I was 16," Erin Blanchfield said. "They both have cornered me in all my professional fights and I couldn't thank them enough."

Erin Blanchfield remarked that both Roberts and Matias have been instrumental to her success as a fighter.

"They both have helped me become the fighter I currently am and are always pushing me to become the best athlete I could be," Erin Blanchfield

said.

At just 18-years-old, Erin Blanchfield's first fight was a huge stepping stone in her career. It was the only fight she had in the Fighting Championships division.

"Once I was in the fight I was just going on autopilot," Erin Blanchfield said. "We trained for every scenario and I was able to win the fight via first round TKO [technical knockout]."

Even though fighting is extremely important to her, so is school. Erin Blanchfield attends Montclair State University as a television and digital media major with a concentration in sports media & journalism. She hopes to be a commentator after her MMA career is over.

Balancing her career and college is difficult due to her busy school and MMA training schedule.

"Time management is huge with balancing both school and fighting professionally," Erin Blanchfield said. "Montclair State University has a lot of class options so I usually can get a schedule that fits around my training schedule. It takes a lot of work and discipline but it's worth it."

Neither of Erin Blanchfield's parents, George and Betsy Blanchfield, attended college. While they were not able to further their education, they are thrilled that she decided to do so.

"We were happy that she had the opportunity that we did not have," Betsy Blanchfield said. "We are overjoyed

that Erin is pursuing her college degree as its value is second to none."

Erin Blanchfield's family is a valuable support system for her. Her father even gave her the nickname "cold-blooded".

"Many of the competitors would have nervous energy and emotions but Erin always seemed to be in a very calm state of mind and have a remarkable poker face before, during and after the competitions," George Blanchfield said. "Because of her ability to stay calm under all circumstances, we would jokingly say she had a coldblooded approach which stuck." Erin Blanchfield's next fight is set to take place soon. Invicta is a part of the UFC, which means that it has the potential to become a championship fight.

"I am not sure that if I win my next fight I would get into the UFC," Erin Blanchfield said. "Fighters never really know when they will get into the UFC. The UFC matchmakers call fighters at my level when they need a replacement fight or short notice fight. It is pretty random. So I just need to keep fighting and winning until I get that call."

Her goal is to fight Valentina Shevchenko, who is the number one fighter in the flyweight division; but for right now, she is focused on making it to the pinnacle of MMA fighting.

"The time and effort is going to pay off," Erin Blanchfield said. "It would mean a lot to me to become a UFC fighter. It has been a goal of mine since I was a young kid and I'm working at it every day."



Blanchfield hits her opponent with an elbow during a fight at Invicta FC 39.

Photo courtesy of Erin Blanchfield